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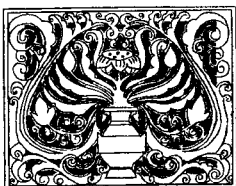


PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A Monthly Journal of the Ramakrishna Order
Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

FEBRUARY 2002



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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

February 2002

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Cover: Swami Vivekananda's Temple at Ramakrishna Math, Belur



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

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No. 2

Traditional Wisdom

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

There the sun shines not. Nor the moon, the stars or flashes of lightning. What to speak of this fire? That shining, all these shine. Verily, everything is illumined by Its (Ultimate Reality's) lustre. (*Kaṭhopanīṣad*, 2.2.15)

यस्मिन्निदं सं च विचैकं स ओतः प्रोतश्च विभुः प्रजासु ।
प्र तद्वोजे अमृतं नु विद्वान् गन्धर्वो नाम निहितं गुहासु ॥

He in whom this universe is collectively and distributively merged as one is the Lord of all beings; He pervades them breadthwise as well as lengthwise. He is proclaimed as the Immortal One. He is the Being seated in the hearts of all. (*Taittirīyāranyaka*, 10.1)

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥

O Gudakesa! I am the Atman residing in all beings, whose beginning, middle and end am I. (*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.20)

The Vedas, the Tantras, and the Puranas and all the sacred scriptures of the world have become as if defiled (as food thrown out of the mouth becomes polluted), because they have been constantly repeated by and have come out of human mouths. But Brahman, or the Absolute, has never been defiled, for no one as yet has been able to express It by human speech. (*Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 3-4)

We sometimes indicate a thing by describing its surroundings. When we say 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) we are merely indicating the shores of an indescribable Beyond. Nor can we say 'is' about It, for that too is relative. Any imagination, any concept is in vain. Neti, neti ('not this, not this') is all that can be said, for even to think is to limit and so to lose. (*Teachings of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 20)

This Month

'The Challenge of Time', this month's editorial, discusses the nature of time and the importance of spiritual practices in an evanescent world.

Swami Sridharanandaji is the head of the Vedanta Centre in Australia. 'Karma Yoga'—based on a lecture he delivered at the Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore—discusses the possible motive in an apparently motiveless work.

Huston Smith, the well-known professor of philosophy, is known for his classic *The World's Religions*. In 'Violence and Non-violence' he discusses these concepts at three different levels. The article is a contribution from AHIMSA.

In our January 2001 number, Dr Nalini Dave wrote on Indian management. Continuing the theme, she presents in 'Motivation in India Management' some managerial techniques based on the Indian tradition. Dr Dave is Professor, Department of Commerce and Business Administration, Saurashtra University, Rajkot.

The questions and answers being serialized under 'Religion and Life' are spontaneous responses from Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj (twelfth President of the Ramakrishna Order) to devotees' queries and doubts. His recorded answers—and the subsequent transcript—were approved by him during his lifetime.

There are about 17 minor Upanishads exclusively devoted to sannyasa (renunciation), and called Sannyasa Upanishads. 'Bhiksukopaniṣad' is one such. Swami Atmapriyanandaji, Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math, presents a lucid translation of the Upanishad. The rather elaborate notes are based on the commentary by Upanishad Brahmayogin, who has commented on all the 108 Upanishads.

Swami Gokulanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, visited some parts of Europe last year. In 'Pilgrimage to Europe' he shares his experiences during the visit.

Swami Baneshanandaji is editor of *The Vedanta Kesari*, an English journal of the Ramakrishna Order. In 'Kena Upaniṣad' he stresses the competence of the student and his spirit of enquiry to attain Brahman.

In 'Peace in the World: Prospects and Proposals' Catherine Stone argues that when children are cared for properly and the needs of people are met, violence will give way to peace. The author was Chief Administrative Officer of Pathways to Peace, an international Peace Messenger Organization.

In 'Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda—Two Kindred Souls' Dr Bhupendranath Seal from Kolkata discusses some incidents from the lives of the two disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

Prabuddha Bharata—100 Years Ago

SATTVA AND THE FINE ARTS

The fine arts resting upon the principle of abstraction, seeking as they do to express 'ideas apprehended in pure contemplation' (Schopenhauer) have a close affinity with the man of *sattva*. He lives in constant touch as it were with the 'ideas apprehended in pure contemplation'. Hence the least defect in representations of these ideas jars upon his most refined susceptibility. A *sattvic* man can never therefore be duped by the gloss of surface appearances, nor does he himself do anything that conflicts with man's cultured tastes. 'He never lays his feet unrhythmically,' as Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna used to say in his beautiful way. In other words a *sattvic* man is the most cultured man imaginable, though he may not know a bit of what we understand by learning. His consciousness is the test of all things. Nothing false or defective can win his approbation.

—from the article by 'V', February 1902

The Challenge of Time

EDITORIAL

Time as a concept has engaged the attention of thinkers for a long time. Every waking second in our life is an encounter with time. For both the person of accomplishments and an average person, the day consists of just twenty-four hours. Nothing more, nothing less. But most people have a feeling of time breathing down their neck. Everyone experiences time according to his or her own mental disposition. Just as people regret their past, they also fear their future. The stream of life carries everyone to the one certainty amid all uncertainties: death—though people hardly think about it.

There is an interesting incident in the *Mahābhārata* ('Vanaparva').¹ During their stay in the forest, Yudhishtira and his four brothers were once seized with thirst and were on the lookout for water. Yudhishtira asked his brother Nakula to climb a tree and look for any water source. He located a beautiful pool of water surrounded by rich vegetation. When he went there and was about to quench his thirst with his palms full of water, he heard a voice without a form (Yaksha): 'This pool belongs to me. If you need water from this pool, you have to answer my questions first.' Nakula did not heed those words, drank the water, and dropped down dead. Concerned about his brother, Yudhishtira sent Sahadeva next. He set out, discovered the pool and was sorry to see Nakula's condition. Nonetheless, not responding to Yaksha's warning, he too met with the same fate as Nakula's. Arjuna and Bhima followed him one after the other. They rebuked the voice challenging its owner to reveal himself to be taught a lesson. But they too lost their lives in trying to drink the water from the pool, unheeding of the warning. Deeply anxious, Yudhishtira went in search of his brothers.

He was beside himself with grief on seeing his beloved brothers unconscious on the bank of the pool. His throat fully parched, he approached the pool to quench his thirst. It was Yaksha again: 'This pool belongs to me. If you want its water, you should first answer my questions. Else, your fate will not be different from that of your brothers.'

A man of discrimination that he was, Yudhishtira told Yaksha: 'Well said. Since you own this pool, I don't have a right to drink this water without your permission. Kindly ask your questions.' Yudhishtira's brilliant answers to Yaksha constitute the important portion of the *Mahābhārata* called 'Yakṣa Prāśna'. The story goes that, pleased with Yudhishtira's answers, Yaksha finally revived all his brothers.

Two important questions and their answers relate to our theme here. The first: 'What is the news?' Yudhishtira's answer: 'The news is: Time is cooking all created beings in a huge cauldron of great delusion, with the sun as the fire, day and night as fuel, and with months and seasons as the ladle to stir the brew.'

The other question illustrates the inevitability of death and people's attitude to it. Yaksha asked Yudhishtira: 'What is wonderful?' He replied: 'Every day people go to the abode of Yama (they die). Still the rest of the world desires to live for ever. What could be more wonderful than that?'

Can we escape being cooked by time? Can we defy death? Vedanta says it is possible. Before we discuss that, we need to analyse the three states of consciousness we pass through daily.

Waking

We have five windows in our human sys-

tem to experience the external world in the waking state. These are the five sense organs: ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. These organs are ever ready to come into contact with their respective sense objects. We gain perceptual experiences from these contacts. These experiences, in turn, leave impressions in our mind.

The effects of time on the external world are too obvious for explanation: months change; seasons change; what was a body of water once is a mountain today; what was a famous edifice once is submerged in water later. In short, the evanescence of the external world brings out vividly the hand of time. At the individual level, a glimpse at our photographs taken at different times—childhood, boyhood, adulthood and later—impresses upon us the changes time has wrought on the body over the years. But, interestingly, the ‘I’ that has responded to the calls from our near ones over the years has remained the same.

The mind is also active in our waking experiences. Our thinking, feeling and willing influence our actions and determine the direction of our life. We experience the passage of time in accordance with the state of our mind. Time hangs heavily on those who do not have anything worthwhile to do. The same holds good when we slavishly do something unpleasant, not in tune with our nature. On the contrary, when we do something we like—in accordance with our aptitude—time flies, as they say. Similarly, happy experiences make us feel they are short-lived. Miserable experiences make us wonder whether a day consists of more than twenty-four hours!

Again, time slips away from us when we allow the mind to drift. Suppose we sit and brood, say, at 8 am some day, on what to do: have breakfast? watch the TV? read the newspaper? have a bath? and so on. After some thirty minutes we find that we had done nothing worthwhile during that time. The mind has taken us for a ride, making us idle during those thirty minutes. If only we had managed our time well with a daily routine, having something specific to do at 8 am, the mind

would not have had a chance to examine different options, hoodwinking us in the process.

Dream

According to Vedanta, dreams are caused by impressions accumulated in the mind not only in this life but also in earlier lives. These impressions are evidently accumulated during the waking state. Dream thoughts and actions do not leave new impressions in the mind. Reactions to them in the waking state, however, will. The notion of time—and space—we have in the dream state is different from that in the waking state. We cover unbelievable distances, traverse years into the past and future, in a dream that lasts maybe for a few minutes according to our waking reckoning. But there is something interesting: the ‘I’ that has dream experiences is the same ‘I’ that has waking experiences.

Deep Sleep

The body and the mind are both inactive in deep sleep, and evidently the world does not exist for the person who sleeps. In the absence of any object to experience, his ‘I’ also is apparently non-existent. When a person gets up from sleep, he describes his sleep experience as ‘I slept happily; I did not know anything.’ Being detached from our body and mind in deep sleep, we escape the miseries arising out of them: physical pain, stress, tension—to name a few. Evidently, time does not exist in deep sleep. On waking up, however, we remember our identities and go about our daily activities. That raises an important question: is there any continuity at all from the time one goes to sleep to the time one awakes?

The Spiritual Dimension

Vedanta says there is a third dimension to the human personality behind the body and the mind. It is called the Atman, the eternally pure, ever-conscious, and ever-free spiritual dimension in us.² This spiritual Reality is the basis and substratum of all the three states of consciousness—waking, dream and deep

sleep. It is this Reality that provides continuity during deep sleep.

The famous Vedantic equation (*mahāvākya*)³ says that the spiritual Reality behind the body and the mind, called Atman, is same as the spiritual Reality behind the universe, called Brahman. This Reality transcends time, space and causation, the three attributes of life in the world. All forms of God that we worship are manifestations of this ultimate Reality called Brahman. The Upanishads emphatically say that by realizing this truth in one's heart—purified of all desires and cleared of all doubts—one transcends death and becomes immortal.⁴ Not that the body continues to exist forever. Being born, it has to die. But a knower of Brahman—being one with Brahman⁵—is not affected by the fall of the body.

Sri Ramakrishna's life demonstrates that God exists and He can be realized, and that God-realization is the goal of human life. Sri Sankara makes it clear in his celebrated work *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* that he who does not strive to realize the Atman despite having had a human birth verily commits suicide, since he kills himself by clinging to things unreal.⁶

Delusion the Cause of All Trouble

Yudhishtira's answer to 'What is the news?' is a thought-provoking one. All created beings are cooked by time in a cauldron of great delusion. As long as we are in delusion we are in the domain of time, and keep getting cooked by it. What is this delusion? What is its source?

The mother of all delusion is to believe that we are the body. This basic belief makes the the external world and its enjoyments the absolute reality for us. How do we, who are essentially spiritual, believe that we are the body? Sri Sankara attributes this to maya, the power of concealment (of Reality) and of distortion (of Reality). The power of concealment (*āvaraṇaśakti*) conceals the spiritual Reality from us. Sri Ramakrishna would hold a towel in front of his face and ask whether those be-

fore him could see him. Similarly, he would say, we are not able to see God because of the veil of maya. The power of distortion (*vikṣepaśakti*) distorts the Reality for us. It makes the Real appear as the unreal and the unreal as the Real. It makes Brahman, the Reality, appear as the world with its varied creations.

Hence it is clear that, essentially, the 'I am the body' idea is the root cause of all trouble. The feeling of 'mine' regarding things in the world stems from this main idea. Sri Sankara, in his illuminating commentary on the *Kāthopaniṣad* (1.3.12), says: 'Alas, how unfathomable, inscrutable and variegated is this maya! Every creature, though in reality identical with the supreme Reality and is instructed as such, does not grasp the fact that "I am the supreme Self." On the contrary, even without being told, he accepts as his Self the non-selves—the aggregate of the body and senses under the idea "I am the son of such a one" though the latter are objects of perception (and hence not the Self).'

Delusion, again, forms part of a graded series beautifully outlined in the *Bhagavadgītā*: 'Brooding over sense objects, one develops attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to desire (to possess the objects). Desire results in anger (towards obstacles to its fulfilment). Anger results in delusion (*moha*). From delusion follows loss of memory (of one's spiritual nature). This results in loss of *buddhi* (discrimination), which leads to spiritual death.'⁷ In short, it was the mind's luxury to brood over sense objects that triggered the systematic downfall ending in spiritual death.

Seeking the Spiritual Reality Within

Time's cooking essentially pertains to the body, which is characterized by six modifications: It comes into being (*jāyate*), continues to exist as an object (*asti*), grows (*vardhate*), undergoes transformation (*vipariṇamate*)—like childhood, youth and old age—decays (*apakṣīyate*) and dies (*naśyati*). These changes, however, do not exist in the Atman since it is

birthless, deathless, eternal, and is not killed even when the body is killed.⁸

As long as one lives a body-centred life—pampering it, abusing it with indulgence, driven by desires—time's cooking will not cease. So a new orientation to life is called for. But things do not appear to be easy. Though a person understands what is good for him, he continues with his old ways in spite of himself, as if forced by someone. What is that force? Arjuna posed the same question to Sri Krishna. The Lord replied: 'It is desire and anger that are responsible for his predicament. Both are born of *rajas*. They are great devourers and sinners. Know them to be your enemies.'⁹ He continues: '... the *manas* is superior to the sense organs. The *buddhi* is superior to the mind. The Atman is superior to the *buddhi*. Understanding thus, and completely establishing the mind in the Atman, vanquish the enemy in the form of desire, an enemy very difficult to subdue.'¹⁰

So it is clear that one needs to seek the spiritual Reality within to free oneself from the effects of time. The first step in this seeking is to awaken the *buddhi*, the discriminative faculty in us.

Need to Awaken the *Buddhi*

Buddhi is an important faculty in human personality having a significant role in character development and mind control. It is essentially a function of the mind. Technically, the mind is called *manas* when it is busy examining different options set before it, yet to arrive at a decision. It is the deliberative faculty in us. When a decision has been arrived at, it is called *buddhi*. *Buddhi* is also the seat of discrimination.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*¹¹ brilliantly describes the role of the *buddhi* with the help of an allegory. The body is compared to a chariot, and the 'I' in us experiencing the vagaries of the body and mind, compared to the master of the chariot. The *buddhi* is equated to the charioteer, the *manas* is compared to the reins and the five sense organs, to the horses. Sense objects

are compared to the road.

If the horses are not broken and if the driver is not awake, and the chariot is in motion, that would be a dangerous situation indeed! The reins, the driver and the master—all this will be taken for a ride by the horses! Similarly, if a person's senses are not subdued, his mind, *buddhi* and he himself will follow the pull of the senses.¹² The course of such a human journey is determined by the sense organs.

On the contrary, if the horses are broken and the driver wide-awake and intelligent, the chariot will reach its destination—the place where the master wants to go—without any trouble. With the sensory system under control and the mind disciplined with the help of an awakened *buddhi*, life's journey will reach its destination, which is God-realization.

The above allegory helps us get a better grasp of the human system. The untrained mind (lured by the senses) does not cooperate with us but keeps acting against our interest as an enemy. When disciplined, the same mind acts as our friend.¹³ The challenge lies, therefore, in making a friend of our mind with the help of the *buddhi*. The training necessary to convert the enemy mind into a friendly mind is achieved by spiritual discipline.

Aids to Mind Training

Swami Vivekananda describes four yogas as paths to God-realization: selfless work (karma yoga), devotion (bhakti yoga), meditation (raja yoga) and discrimination and philosophic reasoning (jnana yoga). A discussion on these yogas is beyond the scope of this essay. However, we try to outline some mind training techniques based on them.

Time management: A strict daily routine is a great help in disciplining the mind and reducing its gyrations. A spiritual aspirant tries to live an ordered life with time allocations for all his daily activities. The enemy mind is sure to rebel at every point protesting that its freedom is infringed. But a patient adherence to the routine ignoring the mind's protests will

help awaken and strengthen the *buddhi*, the vital factor in mind control.

Cultivating a proper attitude towards work: Sri Ramakrishna advocated living in the world and performing one's duties like a maidservant in a rich man's house: She 'performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as "my Rama" or "my Hari". But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all. ... Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God.'¹⁴

Doing all work with a worshipful attitude—with one's whole mind on the work—as an offering to God, is a potent means for mind control. Says Swami Vivekananda: 'Every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of worship of God.'¹⁵ Doing one's work with one's whole mind strengthens the capacity to watch the vagaries of the mind. This 'watching' the mind in turn strengthens the *buddhi*, the importance of which was discussed earlier.

Cultivating devotion to God: The earlier one takes to devotional practices, the better are the chances of one's success in the struggle against the mind. In his famous *Bhajaḡovindam* Sri Sankara admonishes an old man indulging in intricacies of Sanskrit grammar: 'When the end of life is near, grammar rules will be of no avail. Worship the Lord!¹⁶ Sri Krishna advocates devotion to God in this transient and miserable world.'¹⁷

A sincere spiritual aspirant is conscious of the evanescence of life, and reminds himself of the admonition of the *Hitopadeśa*: 'Practise dharma as if the locks of your hair are held by death.'¹⁸ He prays to God and seeks His refuge and protection even now: 'One's lifespan keeps reducing every day, and youth decays. Gone are days spent, never to return. Time is the great devourer of this world. Prosperity is as fleeting and fickle as the waves on the

ocean; life itself is as momentary as lightning. Therefore, O Giver of refuge, grant me protection even now; I have taken refuge in You!'¹⁹

* * *

To sum up. All created beings are subjected to time's ravages driving them to the one certainty: death. Seeking and discovering the latent spiritual dimension in us alone can make us impervious to time's cooking. This is possible by training the mind and the sensory system, following spiritual disciplines and realizing the spiritual Reality within. For it is only the body that is cooked by time, not the eternal Atman. *

References

1. *Mahābhārata*, 'Vanaparva', chapters 267-9.
2. *Nityaśuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhāvo'pi san*, Sri Sankara's introduction to the *Bhagavadgītā*. [Hereafter *Gītā*.]
3. *Ayamātmā brahma —Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.5.19.
4. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.3.15.
5. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.9.
6. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 4.
7. *Gītā*, 2.62.
8. *ibid.*, 2.20.
9. *ibid.*, 3.37.
10. *ibid.*, 3.42-3.
11. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.3.3-9.
12. Compare: 'When the mind runs after the roving sense organs, it carries with it the understanding (*prajñā*), even as a ship is carried away by wind.' *Gītā*, 2.67.
13. *Gītā*, 6.5-6.
14. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1985), p. 81. [Hereafter *Gospel*.]
15. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 5, p. 240.
16. *Bhajaḡovindam*, 1.
17. *Gītā*, 9.33.
18. *Gṛhita iva keśeṣu mṛtyunā dharmamācaret*.
19. *Śivāparādhā-kṣamāpaṇa-stotram*, 17.

Karma Yoga

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

How to convert one's life into a divine life without running away from one's responsibilities, but fulfilling them with an attitude that will lead one to the desired goal?

As we know, according to the Indian tradition there are two paths: *pravṛtti mārga* and *niṣṛtti mārga*. *Pravṛtti mārga*, through the practice of *aparā vidyā*, leads to worldly welfare (*abhyudaya*). *Pravṛtti mārga* is that by means of which we acquire authority and power over the forces of external nature, by managing and organizing them for the betterment of the quality of our life. So *pravṛtti mārga* leads to material prosperity. This is what the world is all about. We try to overcome disease, poverty and weakness by generating proper wealth and resources. This is one way of life.

By contrast, there is another path known as *niṣṛtti mārga*. *Niṣṛtti mārga* means that you don't look outside, but within. You follow *parā vidyā* and master the forces of nature within yourself. You achieve the goal known as *niḥśreyasa* in contrast to *abhyudaya* of the other path. *Niḥśreyasa* is the supreme spiritual well-being of the individual.

These are the two different *mārgas*, the two different paths which we find in our scriptures. As time went on, we understood that these two paths are so different qualitatively and intrinsically that it is not possible to reach the heights of *abhyudaya* and also that of *niḥśreyasa* in a single lifetime. Both are poles apart, we realized. So we had different stages of life: *gārhasthya* for worldly welfare, and *sannyāsa* for spiritual welfare. Society encourages both trends. Excellent professionals are required for generating resources. And with increase in individual resources, national resources increase and the nation prospers. On the other hand, some rare individuals go away

from these social responsibilities and try to create a new awareness and responsibility for the management of their spiritual selves. The 'management of the spiritual Self' is called knowing one's true nature, the potential divinity already within.

Sakāma karma and *niṣkāma karma* are two phrases we find in our scriptures. *Sakāma karma* is action with some desire or motive behind. I work because I gain something financially or some reputation, admiration, applause or approbation. This type of karma we easily understand. We also find that work without motive is not possible. Unmotivated activity is a contradiction in terms, psychologists say. So the phrase *niṣkāma karma* is self-contradictory. Action without a motive is not humanly possible. Then what does the phrase *niṣkāma karma* mean? That's what we shall discuss now.

Before doing that, let me narrate a few incidents. One day, Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendra: 'What do you want?' Narendra replied: 'It is my desire to remain absorbed in Samadhi continually for three or four days, only once in a while coming down to the sense plane to eat a little food.' Thereupon Sri Ramakrishna said: 'You are a small-minded person. There is a state higher even than that. "All that exists art Thou": it is you who sing that song. Settle your family affairs and then come to me. You will attain a state higher than Samadhi.'¹ Sri Ramakrishna used the derogatory Bengali words: '*hīna buddhi, nica buddhi*.' He explained to Narendra that the ideal for him was to be like a banyan tree, under whose shade travel-weary souls would find rest.

The next incident happened in 1884: Sri Ramakrishna was sitting in his room surrounded by his disciples, among whom was Narendra. The conversation drifted to the

Vaishnava religion. The Master gave the gist of the cult of Lord Gauranga and finished by saying: "The religion enjoins upon its followers the practice of three things: relish for the name of God, compassion for all living creatures, and the service of the Vaishnavas, the devotees of the Lord. The real meaning of these precepts is this: God is not different from His name; therefore one should always repeat His name. God and His devotee, Krishna and the Vaishnava, are not separate from each other; therefore one should show respect to all saints and devotees. Realizing that this world belongs to Sri Krishna, one should show compassion to all creatures." Hardly had he uttered the words "compassion to all creatures", when he went into Samadhi. After a while he came back to a semi-conscious state of mind and said to himself: "Compassion for creatures! Compassion for creatures! You fool! An insignificant worm crawling on earth, you to show compassion to others! Who are you to show compassion? No, it cannot be. Not compassion for others, but rather the service of man, recognizing him to be a veritable manifestation of God." ...

When Naren left the room he said to the others: "What a wonderful light I have discovered in those words of the Master! How beautifully he has reconciled the ideal of Bhakti with the knowledge of the Vedanta, generally interpreted as dry, austere, and incompatible with human sentiments! ... Serving man, knowing him to be the manifestation of God, purifies the heart; and in a short time the aspirant who does this realizes that he is a part of God—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. ... If it be the will of God, the day will soon come when I shall proclaim this grand truth to the world at large."²

The third incident is also interesting. Narendranath was pestering Sri Ramakrishna for *nirvikalpa samādhi*. By Sri Ramakrishna's grace and by his own effort he went into

nirvikalpa samādhi one day. 'He was meditating, when suddenly he felt a light at the back of his head, as though a torchlight were playing there. Finally it seemed to burst. His mind became merged in it. ... Niranjan, one of the monastic disciples, went to the Master on seeing Naren in Samadhi, and said: "Naren is dead. His body is ice-cold." At these words Sri Ramakrishna laughed. ... When he (Naren) regained full consciousness of the physical world, he found himself surrounded by his anxious brother-disciples. ... When he presented himself before the Master, the latter said, looking deep into his eyes: "Now then, the Mother has shown you everything. Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realization you have just had be locked up and the key shall remain with me. You have work to do. When you have finished my work, the treasure-box will be unlocked again; and you will know everything then, as you did just now."³

This converting of every moment of my life into an endless act of worship of the Divine is a positive, life-giving, forceful motivation.

So far as recorded history goes, we find Sri Ramakrishna saying on some occasions: 'Narendra will teach others.'⁴ Naren had to accomplish 'Mother's work,' but nowhere do we

find what this 'Mother's work' was. Soon after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, a tremendous amount of restlessness got hold of Narendra, and he went round the whole of India to find out for himself what that 'Mother's work' was. And still later, through this experience he saw for himself to what a state society had come down to, especially in India, and he remarked that 'millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes.'⁵ This is where we have brought ourselves in spite of our rich heritage. Swamiji said that the immense spiritual wealth of India still remains unutilized. He had known that spiritual wealth through his own spiritual experiences, and it was given to him to teach us how to utilize that spiritual wealth. Thus the 'Mother's

work' of Sri Ramakrishna assumed a specific direction after Swamiji's wandering days. He came to realize that he had come to assist Sri Ramakrishna in his mission to rehabilitate humanity, specially Indian society, on spiritual grounds.

Now, how do we postulate a common factor between material prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and spiritual well-being (*niḥśreyasa*)? Because, according to our understanding, *pravṛtti mārga*, *aparā vidyā* and *abhyudaya* belong to one stream, and *nivṛtti mārga*, *parā vidyā* and *niḥśreyasa* belong to the other. How do we find out the common factor between the two, which would help India regenerate itself materially as well as spiritually? Again, this must be done according to the Indian method, based on India's spiritual wealth. This was the challenge Swami Vivekananda faced. And we find that in the later part of his life, he said to the Indians: 'But the one great danger in meditating over long-past greatness is that we cease to exert ourselves for new things, and content ourselves with vegetating upon that by-gone ancestral glory and priding ourselves upon it. We should guard against that. In ancient times there were, no doubt, many Rishis and Maharshis who came face to face with Truth. But if this recalling of our ancient greatness is to be of real benefit, we too must become Rishis like them. Ay, not only that, but it is my firm conviction that we shall be even greater Rishis than any that our history presents to us. ... [I]n the midst of our present degradation lies, only dormant for a time, the potentiality of the future greatness of our religion, ready to spring up again, perhaps more mighty and glorious than ever before.'⁶ If Swamiji could speak so confidently about the future of India, he also knew how he would go about it. And that's where Swamiji's karma yoga has an important role to play.

We saw that *niṣkāma karma* is a contradic-

tion in terms according to the dictionary. This was known to our ancient teachers because they had said that the three desires (*eṣaṇās*)—desire for wealth (*vittaiṣaṇā*), desire for progeny (*putraiṣaṇā*) and desire for fame (*yaśaiṣaṇā*)—are the motive factors of each and every human activity. Either we want wealth or recognition or we want that the world should remember us for a long time to come. Let's not confine the word *putraiṣaṇā* only to desire for children; progeny can also imply a following to keep our name glowing. Without these three motives no human activity is possible.

The concept of *niṣkāma* or selflessness should have not a dictionary meaning but an implied (*pāribhāṣika*) meaning. To perform *niṣkāma karma* means that I refuse to be motivated by the above three motives. 'I will be

motivated by a motive which refuses to succumb to these three motivations.' This is what *niṣkāma karma* means.

My motive for work should not make me a victim of these three *eṣaṇās* or desires. This is a negative approach. What could be the positive outlook then? As

nothing flourishes in negation or vacuum, a positive motive is also needed, and that is the creation of a fourth motive: to convert my life into an endless worship of the Divine. This converting of every moment of my life into an endless act of worship of the Divine is a positive, life-giving, forceful motive. This motive removes from my mind the other three motives, which I am familiar with.

So the *niṣkāma karma* ideal, according to scriptural understanding, means that we develop will-power and determination, by which we become free from bondage to our body-mind, wealth and reputation.

We educate ourselves all the time that every moment of our life, every activity of our life, must be motivated by a worshipful attitude. This is the special meaning of the

A new type of work culture is needed and India can offer it. To offer whatever we do—the very best—to the Divine is the ideal of this work culture.

Vedanta enunciated by Swami Vivekananda.

What does Vedanta say? It says that the whole universe is an emanation from the Divine. It is the Divine everywhere. To see the Divine everywhere is the goal.

A new dimension is being added to our thinking now. If the whole universe is nothing else but the Divine, why can't we educate ourselves to see the whole world as the temple of the Divine? So let us open up the doors and windows of the temples present within us and let fresh air come in. Let us thereby outgrow the man-made limitations of seeing the Divine only in shrines or other places of worship. The whole world is surcharged with the Divine. Let's take advantage of it. As soon as we enter the portals of a temple, an inexplicable peace envelops us and saturates us. We have confined our capacity to see and think of Him within the four walls of a temple or other places of worship. We need to widen our vision.

The next point is, does this satisfy us emotionally? As we know, every human being has four faculties: feeling, thinking, willing and action. The faculty of rationality or thinking is the activity of the brain. The capacity to feel is the faculty of the heart. We should become people with a broad heart and profound intelligence. The third faculty given to human beings is ingenuity. That is, as an individual I have my own convictions and understanding. If someone asks me to do something, I can do it only after I am convinced. Then there is that endless desire to know the Unknown. That is how human beings have done so much. Progress in the fields of science, technology, art, medicine and the like shows that we are dissatisfied with the present. This dissatisfaction is nothing but the desire to know the true nature of everything. With this background we should think of *niṣkāma karma* and karma yoga. An attitudinal change is what is needed.

We should remember that we are divine and our aim is to realize that divinity. Our life should be one continuous worship of the Divine. This is the concept of Swami Vivekananda's karma yoga.

That is how we convince ourselves of the ideal of 'work is worship'.

The next important point is work culture. We say that India is yet to develop this work culture. The westerner, owing to his or her dedication to work, does not shirk responsibilities. We are expert shirkers. We are lazy. India has its own spiritual strength, but does it possess a work culture also? The present work culture everywhere appears to be nothing but a rat race, a set of ambitions to reach certain goals. A new type of work culture is needed and India can offer it. To offer whatever we do—the very best—to the Divine is the ideal of this work culture. To pursue my profession as a pursuit of excellence, a pursuit of perfection,

is the ideal. We must take care of the means and the ends take care of themselves. This is an infallible axiom of life. So we find that from the philosophical point of view, the concept of a universal temple remains. At the same time, following the *pravṛtti mārga*, *aparā vidyā* may lead to material prosperity, but what happens to the individual?

The individual, looking upon the whole universe as the temple of the Divine, tries to transform his work into worship. He thus contributes to the resources of the nation. He does this by following the path of *pravṛtti*, but slowly it becomes *nivṛtti*.

This is the challenge that Swami Vivekananda faced; His answer was that India will regenerate itself. There will be a resurgent India when it will absorb all the technology that is available to it and put in its own ingenuity. Let that spiritual wealth be utilized by transforming the life of a *pravṛtti mārgin* following the *aparā vidyā*. Let's not disturb the *aparā vidyā*. Therefore, philosophically, we understand now that by *niṣkāma karma* we do not infer the dictionary meaning. If we love someone, can we stop thinking about that person? No, we can't.

Such a deep and abiding affection has to be generated between ourselves and the goal of life. The goal is, '*ātyantika duḥkha nivṛtti* and *parama sukha prāpti*, removal of essential misery and attaining absolute happiness.' We should remember that we are divine and our aim is to realize that divinity. Our life should be one continuous worship of the Divine. This is the concept of Swami Vivekananda's karma yoga. This concept will help India rise. *

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You Can Only Serve, Not Help

You cannot help anyone, you can only serve: serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help any one of his children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship. I should see God in the poor, and it is for my salvation that I go and worship them.

—Swami Vivekananda (*CW*, 3. 246-7)



❖ There is No Indispensable Man ❖

Sometime when you're feeling important;
 Sometime when your ego's in bloom;
 Sometime when you take it for granted
 You're the best qualified in the room;
 Sometime when you feel that your going
 Would leave an unfillable hole,
 Just follow these instructions
 And see how they humble your soul:
 Take a bucket and fill it with water,
 Put your hand in it up to the wrist,
 Pull it out and the hole that's remaining
 Is a measure of how you'll be missed.
 You can splash all you wish when you enter,
 You may stir up the water galore,
 But stop and you'll find that in no time
 It looks quite the same as before.
 The moral of this quaint example
 Is do just the best that you can,
 Be proud of yourself but remember,
 There's no indispensable man.

Violence and Non-Violence

HUSTON SMITH

Violence can occur in many spheres of life and I will note three: the public sphere (the crisis in the Middle East is a current example of that), the interpersonal sphere, and the personal sphere (we can be violent towards ourselves). I'm going to begin with the public sphere. The greatest danger or threat to peace in the nineteenth century was nationalism. The greatest threat to peace in the twentieth century was ideology as nations lined up on both sides of the iron curtain. But with the collapse of ideology and the end of the cold war, the greatest danger to peace in the twenty-first century is going to be ethnic conflict. As a student of religion, I'll say these conflicts are not really religious anymore. When new religions emerged—Buddhism out of Hinduism, Christianity out of Judaism, and Islam out of those two, there were religious wars because it was differences in theology that brought the conflict. But now, despite what the media tells us, these are not religious wars. They are political wars. In the Middle East today the Muslim couldn't care less what the Jews believe. Actually the difference in beliefs between the two factions is negligible compared with the burning issue of hatred and the memories of atrocities unavenged. I caught a news clip when Bosnia was a centre of ethnic conflict and it went like this: The interviewer said, 'Are there any Serbians here?' (This was in a Serbian village.)

The interviewer then said to the Serb, 'Are there any Muslims in your village?'

She said, 'No. What would you do if there was one?'

'Well! We would tell him to leave and if he didn't, we would kill him.'

'Why?'

'Because that's what they did to us four hundred years ago.'

This is the burning factor in ethnic conflicts today: atrocities that have not been avenged. And somehow or other, we're going to have to stop driving ahead while looking only at the rear-view mirror, but that's going to be very difficult to do. Fortunately, with enough problems to make one despair, we do have great heroes and we have great successes. The chief among them is Mahatma Gandhi, who freed a continent through non-violence from the 200 years' oppression of colonialism. His followers were Martin Luther King, who succeeded in the basic aim of the Afro-American freedom movement in the USA, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa. The latter made a wise statement when he was elected president. He said: 'There has been great suffering caused by the Caucasian Afrikaner to our people and we can't just sweep it under the rug. However, there can be no future without forgiveness.' So he proposed that any Afrikaner who would come forward and confess the injustice he or she had unwittingly inflicted on the native people, would be exonerated. For others, there would have to be some mode of accountability.

I'll stop discussing the public violence and move to the interpersonal. This is affected so much by the press, television and video. The amount of violence that doubles for entertainment is just horrendous. I've heard that the mothers are thinking of getting together and organizing a march maybe across the Bay Bridge or somewhere else to boycott the advertisers that turn to violence as the chief mode of selling products. Here is one incident that happened a few days back. We work closely with Tibetan immigrants, and actually have a single mother and her son living in our basement apartment downstairs. And she was telling about another Tibetan family she

knew. They have a boy, four years old, and one of the children during a visit said something that the four-year-old didn't like. He went out into the kitchen and got a butcher knife and came in and said: 'I'm going to kill you!' What appalled the Tibetan in our house telling this story was that the boy's mother laughed. The narrator was appalled that this has become a laughable matter in our culture. In interpersonal relations, so much depends on the words we use. In the book *Non-violent Communication* the author points out how much depends on language—the tone and the words that are used—some can push levers of anger and others may have an opposite effect.

I'll tell you a different incident that happened, again, a few days ago, the day when the trains weren't running from Berkeley to San Francisco. I needed to go to an editorial conference and I don't drive in the San Francisco area. I went to the Berkeley station and got the news that there were no trains. There were hardly any people at the station. I needed to get the word to my publisher that I wouldn't be there for the one o'clock appointment but my ears can't manage modern phones. I tried, and a taped voice gave me some choices and I couldn't figure out what I was doing. There was a man near by and he may have been a street person. He certainly was a very poorly dressed Afro-American, and I approached him. This wasn't out of my virtue. It was out of my need. I needed help. And so I explained my situation and asked him if he would listen to the response and tell me how to proceed. At first, at my approach he seemed sort of alarmed and uncomfortable. But when he found a person in need and that he could help, his manner changed completely. He was just as helpful as he could be, and my message went across. I thanked him sincerely. And that happened to be one of the 'up' moments on interpersonal communications.

And now I want to come to what we

don't think about as often. I may not have thought about it if I hadn't been married to a psychologist. The third is the private dimension of violence. There can be violence to one's self, born of self-hatred. There was a book I came upon, written by a psychoanalyst. I can't even remember the title, but it had a shocking thesis that often people's major problem is they set up actions that are sure to fail because this would reinforce their deep conviction that they personally are worthless. Psychological studies have shown that people when asked to put down their good points and their bad points invariably have a far longer list of bad points—maybe three times longer than the list of virtues they acknowledged. Now all of this—and here I come to my concluding thesis—comes down to the modern behavioural model of the human self. Dan Goldman, who is the Behavioural Science Editor for the *New*

Our basic nature is
relatedness. We are
brothers and sisters,
and the heart of that
relatedness is love.

York Times, says that the closest we come to having a model of the human self is Freudianism. And it is not an inspiring model because, as you know, it proposes that the basic human drives are sex and aggression.

Human beings are animals who draw pictures of themselves in their mind and then spend their life to living up to their pictures. Now, with such a poor model of the human self, is it any wonder that we are seen to live and behave badly? What I just want to say is that not all human history has depicted humans living in terms of a poor model of the human self. Quite the opposite. Until the modern era, everybody, all the other cultures—and this is an area I have some expertise in—believed that we human beings were descendants from the Divine. And that means that we have the reflection of the Divine within us.

I will give you just two examples coming out of this traditional view. We have a six-year-old grandson in San Jose and once a month we drive down to recharge our batteries by keeping him out of school. We don't go on the same day because neither of us is will-

ing to share his attention with the other. And this story, again, comes from Kendra the last time she went down. When they went to the neighbourhood playground, they found two children already on the swings and slide. A girl of about eight and a boy, maybe five, presumably her brother. And you know how children are. Without patience or preliminary, the girl asked Kendra, 'What are we?' Kendra squinted a little bit and said, 'Well, I don't know ... Vietnamese?' 'No.' 'Korean?' 'No!' with a touch of irritation entering. And when Kendra ventured a third mistaken guess, the irritation erupted. The girl said, 'No, what are we?' Kendra, at that point, thinking that maybe if the girl knew the answer she would paraphrase the question a little bit better just said, 'I give up. What are you?' And the girl said, 'We are brother and sister, and so we love each other. And our grandmother tells us that if we love her, when we become grandparents, our grandchildren will love us.' Well, out of the mouth of babes. In our secular, cynical times it may take a child who hasn't been too much indoctrinated—and maybe one of Asian extraction too—to first of all pose the right question: *not* 'who are we?' which points to differences, but 'what are we? what is our basic nature?' And her answer was equally on the mark. Our basic nature is *relatedness*. We

are brothers and sisters, and the heart of that relatedness is love. Now this is a view of human nature that can inspire.

A very encouraging sign in the West is a revised theory of human nature that stems basically from the work of a little-known psychologist, Ian Suttie, a Scot who spent his life in studying child development. And his thesis was that Freud's postulate of the two basic drives—sex and aggression—was wrong. From years of watching infants, he became convinced that the primary impulse in the child is an outreach for communion and communication. In that earliest situation the only thing it has to give to its mother is its body and its adoring eyes on her face, which of course elicit an adoring returning gaze. The infant will gurgle and smile and then the mother's response is escalated in seeing that. That response is a mode of flirtation. And Ian Suttie said that is the most primitive, most original outreach from the child. No one knows Suttie but everybody in psychology knows the person who picked up his theory, John Bulby.

And so I leave you with a note of hope that perhaps our uninspiring vision of our self will be replaced by the traditional inspiring vision of goodness as being the most fundamental element within us. *

Do not recognize wickedness in others. Wickedness is ignorance, weakness. What is the good of telling people they are weak? Criticism and destruction are of no avail. We must give them something higher; tell them of their own glorious nature, their birthright.

—Swami Vivekananda (CW, 6. 141-2)

The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue.

—Swami Vivekananda (CW, 1. 39)

Motivation in Indian Management

DR NALINI V DAVE

Indian philosophy considers work essentially as an exercise of energy. A living body has no alternative but to work. And this work is considered duty and is the only means in the hands of the individual to grow and develop materially as well as spiritually. Hence management is to direct people's energies only in the right direction by re-establishing this basic truth of our philosophy where motivation is taken not as something external but rather internal.

The *Bhagavadgita* is a story of motivation. Arjuna was initially motivated but he lost his motivation due to his micro-vision, due to some obstacles, due to some confusion in his mind. All that was required was to remove these obstacles and make him view the situation on a wider canvas by applying a macro-vision. Thus, removing the obstacles during the performance of our job is motivation from the Indian point of view. For example, a piece of sandalwood kept in water for a long period smells bad; but if dried and cleaned, its sweet fragrance will spread around naturally once again. What we are doing here is only removing the obstacles to the expression of the sweet scent. Such motivation involves inner beauty and does not prompt any greed in an individual to have more and more in return for his work, as envisaged in western motivation theories. Indian philosophy, instead, states that people would be most motivated to work when management helps them in developing and manifesting their innate divinity and potential capabilities by removing everything that comes in the way of their performance. The whole process of motivation includes these five stages: (a) listen patiently; (b) place stress on good or plus points, ie strengths; (c) discuss at the intellectual level; (d) show an action plan to achieve the goal;

and (e) discuss the consequences of the plan. This is a wonderful way of motivating an individual's full potential towards a desired action. Global management theories need to follow this Indian practice for their own benefit.

Motivation, moreover, also needs new dimensions in a changing scenario. Nowadays, multicultural management is becoming important. It will become more crucial in the future, when management must have the skill to cope with diversity. If it can take care of the interests of different cultures, if people working in an organization are assured of their interests, they will be motivated automatically. Traditional motivation theories will no longer work then. Thus the ways and means to motivate people will be quite different in the management theories of the future.

Further, the number of blue-collar jobs reduced from 88% in the 1960s to 17% in the 1990s due to technological revolution and is likely to dwindle further to only about 2% by 2025. The place of capitalists is being taken away by knowledge professionals today. In fact, the work force will be divided only into two categories in the future: 20% would be knowledge workers and 80% would be service workers who will be more diversely educated and trained; the latter group will also be well-informed technocrats. The whole world is now getting transformed into a competitive global market where there will be no job security in the future. This is already being seen in the West, where lay-offs are very common. An individual has to prove his competence by performance—not only for his development but also for his own survival.

Organizations, on the other hand, are seeking horizontal growth in their style of functioning. They operate through autonomous teams. Work itself is a leader and moti-

vator for them. Once goals are set, they know what is expected of them and they perform at their best. Further, organizations sometimes run even without having their offices at any given place. People work even from their homes with the help of computers and innovative tools of telecommunication. The manager may even work with some people for years, without meeting them personally!

All these newer developments that are gathering momentum make motivation an internal factor. It will no longer remain an external factor, as viewed by western management philosophies. Therefore Indian philosophy, which has always considered motivation 'internal' since the Vedic age, will be more appropriate for the future. Individuals are born divine, and are full of potential capabilities. Management has only to provide appropriate fields and opportunities and environments for them to manifest these potentialities, that's all. The obstacles to the manifestation should also be removed. This is the essence of motivation in Indian philosophy. Such a vision of motivation deserves to be taken up seriously in the future.

Human Management

Human resource is considered the most important resource, as it contributes to the effective functioning of an organization with its skill, talent, intelligence, creativity and experience. Certain qualities required for better 'people management' in Indian philosophy will be dealt with now.

The first thing Indian philosophy says is, 'Consider every work as sacred and important.' In Indian culture no work is superior or inferior. Every work is equally important. What matters is the attitude with which the work is performed. 'Work' is for bringing out the innate divinity and effecting individual growth—both material as well as spiritual. Such an understanding of the dignity of labour on the part of the management will go a long way to form a healthy and harmonious relationship with employees.

The second point in Indian philosophy is the oneness of existence. Vedanta says that the same Self is present in every being. There is a holistic idea of the universe, which provides the vision of oneness of humanity. *Aham brahmasmi* ('I am Brahman') and *tattvamasi* ('You are That') are the fundamental teachings of Vedanta. If the manager makes his employees feel that the same Spirit dwells within them as in him, they will excel in whatever work they perform. This is true 'people management'.

The *rajarshi* concept of our scriptures indicates that a manager must be a raja, king, skilled in governance; at the same time he must be a rishi, a seer. The ideal human being is one with divine qualities, who can successfully manage himself as well as others with love and care. Robert Owen used to say that if we can take care of our machines, why should we not take care of our human beings, who are living beings with feelings, emotions and likes and dislikes? The manager has to learn to win people over by his caring nature. Indian philosophy holds that people cannot be won over by command or order but by love and consideration of equality alone.

A manager is a leader, and a leader is always expected to cultivate an exemplary behaviour because he is looked upon as an ideal by the people around him. The values followed by him will be followed by the people around. His thoughts and actions will influence his surroundings. Therefore if he manifests the qualities of a *rajarshi*, a king-sage, he is sure to win people over. His honesty, sincerity and devotion to the ideal will influence his subordinates too.

Managing the self means one has to manage oneself effectively—that is, one has to control one's passions, desires, and ambitions. Self-management also means the maintaining of balance in one's affairs. Control over one's anger, aversion, desires, and such other qualities in day-to-day functioning will help the manager be successful.

An important problem of modern times

is stress. Generally, managers experience stress due to a large number of factors. The global market economy, with a competitive environment, has caused further stress. Nowadays managers have to work in a target-oriented atmosphere, with deadlines specified, where they will have to perform in a very competitive, conflicting and challenging environment with the sword of lay-off always hanging upon their heads. In such a situation, in order to cope with stress, the manager should understand the principle of karma yoga of the *Bhagavadgita*.

What does the *Bhagavadgita* teach? 'You are free to act or not to act or choose how to act.' Work is your jurisdiction. But after performance, the result falls into the jurisdiction of the laws of nature. The result does not belong to your jurisdiction.

Every action ends in a result: this is a scientific truth. Therefore if a contrary or unexpected result comes, it should not disturb your mind because the result is not in your hands. You should not internalize the situation by considering yourself to be a failure, because the result is an objective reality. Failure or success is a subjective perception. It is also affected by so many other factors like karma, which are simply beyond you. All you are expected to do as an effective manager is work sincerely, giving importance to minute details and with perfect concentration. This demands the practice of meditation, which is yet another contribution of Indian philosophy. Concentration controls the mind, eliminating any disturbing thought while you are in your workplace.

Concentration on the work improves its quality and the result is also good. Concentration also brings in peace and calm, which are antidotes to stress. The manager has therefore to consider all work as sacred and work as an agent. Then work will not entangle him and will not deceive him either. The *Bhagavadgita* has proclaimed in a loud voice: 'The doer of good never comes to grief.' So all that the effective manager needs to do is work with devotion and sincerity, concentrating on all details, giving the mind only to the means (process) and not the end, and leave the rest to God or nature. Everything will then become favourable for him. This philosophy is so perfect

... all that the effective manager needs to do is work with devotion and sincerity, concentrating on all details, giving the mind only to the means (process) and not the end, and leave the rest to God or nature.

that it is both time-tested as well as foolproof. Compare this with western management philosophy, where the result or end is the prime factor. Imagine the stress one has to endure by adhering to such a philosophy! Stress will not only affect the person, it also will affect his work, and his efficiency will also reduce as days pass by.

Indian thought declares that we are all '*amritasya putrah*, children of immortal bliss'. Everyone around us is also that. Therefore the manager has not much to grumble or complain. On the contrary, he has a fertile land to cultivate his skills and service attitude.

Such a wonderful philosophy of work is the imperative need of the world of the future. Indian philosophy has gone to the root of all the problems and has brought out wonderful answers to them. Such a school of management will have a bright future enabling managers to be stress-free, yet successful. *

Leadership is like moving a string. You cannot move it by pushing from behind. What you have to do is get ahead and pull.

RELIGION AND LIFE

Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

Maharaj, how should we follow the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna in our lives?

If you can love the human being, you can love God too. You must superimpose on God your love for the world. It's like playing with dolls. Children buy dolls for a few pennies; and these dolls become their children, parents, and so on. Suppose the dolls break, they weep for a long time. It has so happened, rarely though, that children indeed have died by the sorrow of separation from their dear 'children'. Similarly if we can superimpose on God our love for the world, we can attain God. When Sri Ramakrishna prayed, it wasn't superimposition but actuality. He would say, for example, 'Can you love God in this way?' And so saying, he would fall on the ground and rub his face on the earth and weep like a helpless child. Seeing this everyone would be stunned. So holy company and the study of holy scriptures are imperative needs for spiritual progress. Just sitting with eyes closed for a few moments will not help: you will only see darkness there.

Sri Ramakrishna said that we should practise at least one part. What did he mean?

Sri Ramakrishna said that he had done sixteen parts (a rupee in those days comprised 16 annas). He wanted us to do at least one part. Can you do what all Sri Ramakrishna or Holy Mother did? You cannot. But you may try to follow one or two ideas. Do you know what it is like? When the mother bird teaches flying to its chicks, it teaches step by step. The little chick jumps once, jumps again, and thus it learns to fly. Even so we should practice, and progress gradually.

Swami Vivekananda was singing before Ramakrishna once: 'Call on Him always....' Sri Ramakrishna said, of course out of fun:

'You fool. Do not say what you do not practise. Instead, say "Call on Him twice a day."' You must struggle. In the midst of all your work you must remember God. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'One can meditate even with eyes open. One can meditate even while talking. Take the case of a man with toothache ... even when his teeth ache he does all his duties, but his mind is on the pain. Likewise one can meditate with eyes open and while talking to others as well' [*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 605]. So when attraction for God increases the mind naturally goes to God always. The mother is engaged in her household work but her mind is fixed on her child. In the midst of her work she repeatedly peeps in to see what her child is doing. In the kirtan, the poets puts these words into Radha's mouth: 'Your Shyam is only a verbal jugglery for you; but for me He is a pain within my heart.' When there is pain within the heart, the mind will be engrossed in Him alone. We must strive for that.

By saying that we must renounce 'kāmīnī and kāñcana, woman and gold', did not Sri Ramakrishna belittle women?

You see, Sri Ramakrishna never belittled anyone. He saw Rati's mother, that fallen woman, as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. To him, never, never was anyone low or to be despised. Hearing his words, others become alert and conscious that there is divinity in everyone. Sri Ramakrishna saw a drunkard and there was an awakening of the bliss of Brahman in him. There is the idea of difference in the human mind, but in spite of that one should keep one's vision pure.

Why is the word kalpataru not mentioned quite often in Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master?

Whatever you wish you will get from the *kalpataru*, the wish-fulfilling tree. But not always are our desires in the right direction. As spiritual aspirants, we should be firm about what we desire. In the well-known song, it's said: '*param dhan ei paraśmaṇi, jā cābi tā dīte pāre*, God, the philosopher's stone, is the greatest treasure; He can give you whatever you wish.' The author of *The Great Master* therefore did not like the idea of *kalpataru* much. He has instead preferred the phrase '*abhaya-dāne ātmaprakāś*, manifesting Himself in order to bestow the boon of fearlessness.'

Sri Ramakrishna says that everyone will be liberated—some soon, some later. Do we have any hope, Maharaj?

We should have the faith that it's true in our case also. One day or other we shall be liberated, to be sure. Where will everything go during *pralaya*? If we accept the words of the Purāṇas, we must know that we all shall go back to Him.

When Narendra expresses doubt about Sri Ramakrishna's visions, the latter approaches the Divine Mother. Was Sri Ramakrishna doubting his own visions then?

You see, Sri Ramakrishna would have so many visions. But Narendra would remark that they were all owing to delirium. Sri Ramakrishna asked the Divine Mother if he was really suffering from delusions. Mother said, 'What does Narendra know?' Sri Ramakrishna then told Naren, 'You fool!' Sri Ramakrishna was very simple and had deep faith in Narendra. So he referred Naren's doubt to the Divine Mother. The doubt was not his, you must remember. He was like a simple child and so referred others' doubts to the Divine Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna says that we should be like a cast-off leaf before a wind. Elsewhere he asks us to unfurl our sails. Why two different types of in-

structions?

You 'unfurl your sail' during your sadhana. But you become like a cast-off leaf before a gale when you depend on Him completely. This dependence on Him comes after experiencing His grace. We must first of all unfurl our sails, and then think of becoming like cast-off leaves.

Who is an ātmārāma?

He who does not need any outer instrument to enjoy supreme bliss is called *ātmārāma*. He revels in the bliss of his Atman.

Maharaj, what is mukti?

Mukti means liberation from bondage. The bird is imprisoned in a cage. If it is let out, it becomes free. We are imprisoned in the cage of maya. If let out of this imprisonment, we become free. A cow tied to a stump with a rope becomes free if the rope is released. It is not that you do not desire liberation. You all want it. But the intensity is lacking. That is the main problem.

It is not wrong if you love your child. But the problem comes when you say 'he or she is mine.' My own mother once told me, 'My love is selfless.' I replied, 'Not fully, but quite selfless.' I asked her, 'Do you love other people's children just as you love me?' She replied with a smile, 'Not fully; but quite.'

To the disciple the guru is none other than God Himself. So if we love the guru it is as good as loving the Lord. Isn't it?

In human beings there is both human nature and divine nature. If you consider only the divine aspect, there will be no attachment; On the other hand, considering only the human aspect will result in attachment. Let not attachments grow. The relation between the guru and the disciple is never one of attachment. It is a spiritual relationship.

—Compiled by Smt Manju Nandi Mazumdar

Bhikṣukopaniṣad

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI ATMAPRIYANANDA

Synopsis

This Upaniṣad from *Śukla Yajurveda* classifies ascetics into four categories as *kuṭīcaka*, *bahūdaka*, *hamsa* and *paramahansa*, and explains the distinctive characteristics of each.

Peace Chant

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om. That¹ is Infinite. This² [too] is Infinite. The Infinite proceeds from the Infinite. Taking the Infinite from the Infinite, It remains as the Infinite alone. Om Peace, Peace, Peace!³

Four kinds of ascetics (mendicant monks)

चतुर्विधा भिक्षवः

अथ भिक्षूणां मोक्षार्थिनां कुटीचकबहूदकहंसपरमहंसाश्चेति चत्वारः ।१।

1. Now, ascetics (mendicant monks), who aspire for liberation (*mokṣa*), are of four kinds: *kuṭīcaka*, *bahūdaka*, *hamsa* and *paramahansa*.

Characteristics of *kuṭīcaka* ascetics

कुटीचकाः

कुटीचका नाम गौतमभरद्वाजयाज्ञवल्क्यवसिष्ठप्रभृतयोऽष्टौ ग्रासांश्चरन्तो योगमार्गे मोक्षमेव प्रार्थयन्ते ।२।

2. *Kuṭīcaka* ascetics such as Gautama,⁴ Bharadvāja,⁵ Yājñavalkya⁶ and Vasiṣṭha⁷ subsist on eight mouthfuls of food; they seek nothing but liberation (*mokṣa*) by the path of yoga.

Characteristics of *bahūdaka* ascetics

बहूदकाः

अथ बहूदका नाम त्रिदण्डकमण्डलुशिखायज्ञोपवीतकाषायवस्त्रधारिणो ब्रह्मर्षिगृहे मधु मांसं वर्जयित्वाष्टौ ग्रासान् भैक्षाचरणं कृत्वा योगमार्गे मोक्षमेव प्रार्थयन्ते ।३।

3. Then the [characteristics of the] *bahūdaka* ascetics: [they] carry a threefold emblematic staff (*tridaṇḍa*)⁸ and water-vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*), have a tuft of hair [on the head] (*śikhā*), and wear the sacred thread (*sūtra*) and an ochre coloured garment (*kāṣāya vastra*). Avoiding wine and meat,⁹ they subsist on eight mouthfuls of food secured as alms from the houses of *brāhmaṇa* sages (*brahmarṣis*)¹⁰ and seek liberation (*mokṣa*) alone, following the path of yoga.

Characteristics of *hamsa* ascetics

हंसाः

अथ हंसा नाम ग्राम एकरात्रं नगरे पञ्चरात्रं क्षेत्रे सप्तरात्रं तदुपरि न वसेयुः । गोमूत्रगोमयाहारिणो नित्यं चान्द्रायणपरायणा योगमार्गे मोक्षमेव प्रार्थयन्ते ।४।

4. Next, the [characteristics of the] *hamsa* ascetics: [this class of ascetics] do not stay for more than one night in a village, five nights in a town, and seven nights in a holy place (*kṣetra*). Subsisting on [food obtained] from a cow,¹¹ and constantly devoted to the *cāndrāyana* vow,¹² they seek nothing but liberation through the path of yoga.

(to be concluded)

Notes

1. 'That' here means the supreme Brahman (*para-brahman*).
2. 'This' here means the conditioned Brahman (*apara-brahman*).
3. The repetition of the word 'peace' thrice is to ward off the three kinds of miseries (*duḥkha-traya*): (i) *ādhibhautika duḥkha* (misery due to beings, say, wild animals, serpents, cruel humans, etc); (ii) *ādhidaiṇvika* (misery due to natural calamities like earthquakes, floods and cyclones, which are ordinarily beyond our control); (iii) *ādhyātmika* (misery relating to one's own body and mind, that is, physical and mental illnesses). In order that *vidyā* or learning be effective, both the teacher and the taught ought to be free from all these three kinds of misery. Hence the word *śāntiḥ* (peace) is chanted thrice, to ward off the threefold misery.
4. Gautama, a celebrated sage in the *Rāmāyana*, whose wife Ahalyā was restored to her natural form by Śrī Rāma.
5. Bharadvāja, a sage who received Śrī Rāma and Sītā in his hermitage while they were in exile in the forest.
6. Yājñavalkya's name occurs in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*; he was a celebrated sage who expounded the highest knowledge of Brahman to King Janaka.
7. Vasiṣṭha was King Daśaratha's royal priest; he imparted the highest knowledge of Brahman to Śrī Rāma. (These sublime teachings form the text of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*).
8. An ascetic (monk) traditionally carries a staff, called *daṇḍa*, emblematic of having entered the monastic calling. *Daṇḍa* in Sanskrit means 'restraint', 'control'. According to *Manu Smṛti*, there are three kinds of *daṇḍas* or restraints: *vāgdaṇḍa*, restraint in speech; *kāyadaṇḍa*, control of the body; and *manodaṇḍa*, control of the mind (*Manu Smṛti*, 11.10). This is why some monks carry a threefold staff (*tridaṇḍa*). The *daṇḍa* carried by an ascetic monk is symbolic of total self-control.
9. In general, any kind of intoxicant and non-vegetarian food.
10. Meaning, men of godliness and spiritual wisdom.
11. Literally, *gomūtra* and *gomaya* (that is, cow's urine and dung). These are mentioned in the text because they are considered sacred. However, they are not to be taken literally.
12. A religious observance in which the intake of food is regulated by the phase of the moon (*pakṣa* and *tithi*). Starting from fifteen mouthfuls on the full moon day, the food intake is steadily reduced by one mouthful each day during the dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇa pakṣa*) till it is reduced to nothing at new moon. It is then steadily increased in the like manner during the bright fortnight (*śukla pakṣa*).

The Ideal of Sannyasa

Worldly people love life. The Sannyasin is to love death. Are we to commit suicide then? Far from it. ... What is the love of death then? We must die, that is certain; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions—eating, drinking, and everything that we do—tend towards the sacrifice of our self. ... the whole world is one; you are rated a very insignificant part of it, and therefore it is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandise this little self.

—Swami Vivekananda (*CW*, 3. 446)

Pilgrimage to Europe

SWAMI GOKULANANDA

The brotherhood of the Ramakrishna Order is symbolically and physically a representative of the great truth, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the whole world is one family). Swami Vivekananda, the founder of our Order, unified the whole world when he not only preached Vedanta in the West but also placed his representatives at various centres there. As a wandering monk he traversed the length and breadth of India between 1890 and 1893. He visited the West in two spells: between 1893 and 1897, and between 1899 and 1900. Visits to these holy places sanctified by Swamiji are considered by the devout as pilgrimages.

In answer to a question posed by a disciple in Belur Math (1898) on the special influences of places of pilgrimage, Swami Vivekananda said: 'When the whole world is the Form Universal of the Eternal Atman, the Ishvara (God), what is there to wonder at in special influences attaching to particular places? There are places where He manifests Himself specially, either spontaneously or through the earnest longing of pure souls, and the ordinary man, if he visits those places with eagerness, attains his end quite easily. Therefore it may lead to the development of the Self in time to have recourse to holy places' (*The Complete Works*, vol. 7, p. 119).

There are centres in the West that were sanctified by Swamiji or by other illustrious monks of the Ramakrishna Order. For all of us, these centres are places of pilgrimage. A call came to me to visit such a place when I received an invitation to visit Germany sometime in 2001. By the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, my book *How to Overcome Mental Tension* attracted wide at-

tention and was placed in the best-seller category at the World Book Fair 1999, held in Delhi. Many devotees and admirers of Ramakrishna all over the world had heard of this.

Mrs Lipi Paul, Founder-Director of the Stress Management Institute in Frankfurt visited me when she came to India towards the end of 2000. After returning to Germany, Lipi and Amiya Paul wrote to me from Frankfurt, inviting me to visit their Stress Management Institute.

Stress is a big price the western nations pay for their materialistic lifestyle. The consequent psychological maladies resulting in personal and family strife seem to be slowly destabilizing western societies, if not their culture. Indian culture, through its rich heritage of Vedanta and its study of the individual in depth, is making deep impressions in the West, presenting a striking contrast to the Western understanding of psychology. Therefore it is no wonder that Lipi Paul—brought up in the true Indian tradition—has set up the Stress Management Institute with German staff to assist her.



A view of Kuwait City



Stress Management Institute, Idstein, Frankfurt

After careful consideration of the request of Amiya and Lipi Paul, I sought and obtained the permission of our headquarters at Belur Math to undertake the European trip. Meanwhile, other devotees in Europe came to know of my intended visit to Germany, and were keen that I should visit their countries also. It was finally settled that I visit Kuwait (as my ticket was via Kuwait), Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands.

Visit to Kuwait

I arrived in Kuwait on 3 April 2001 at 7:30 am local time and was warmly received by my hosts Arpita and Dipankar, the latter a representative of the Indian Embassy, Dr Madhavan, and others. I entered Kuwait in my *gerua* dress and continued in the same attire during my stay. Sri Prabhu Dayal, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, was very helpful in my entering Kuwait without any hassle.

A special sitting was arranged that evening, right in the heart of that Islamic country: We were singing '*Gurudeva daya karo dina jane*' and '*Ramakrishna saranam*' and this gathering was widely attended by people of different communities. It was a wonderful spiritual evening, with guided meditation followed by *arati*.

After that I spoke briefly on 'The Fragrance of Sri Ramakrishna'.

The next day I had a glimpse of the modern-day westernized Kuwait. When I went into Kuwait City for a short while and had a panoramic view of the city from the top of Kuwait Tower, I saw striking contrasts between the Islamic culture symbolized by the Sultan Centre (a huge shopping complex) on the one hand and the royal splendour of the westernized Shark Shopping Complex and similar symbols of opulence on the other.

Arpita teaches at a school in Kuwait, whose principal is a Christian. I was invited by this school to speak on 'How to Overcome Mental Tension'. So here I was, a monk of a non-sectarian international organization, the Ramakrishna Mission, addressing a multireligious gathering in an Islamic country. Thakur's *lila* alone can make this happen. To our pleasant surprise they did not forget other essential details like distribution of prasad which, of course, was in a typically western style: cashew nuts, dry fruits, and so on.

I left for Frankfurt on the 5th of April. On my way to the airport, I paid a brief visit to Prabhu Dayal, the Indian Ambassador, who received me warmly over a cup of tea. I was



View of Innsbruck



A view of Frankfurt

seen off at the airport by some devotees and a representative of the Indian Embassy.

Frankfurt

The flight from Kuwait to Frankfurt was on time. We landed at Frankfurt on 5 April. Germany occupies a unique place in history in terms of its culture and people, particularly in Europe. Of course, what strikes one is the deep interest in our religion and culture the Germans evinced. Besides Max Muller, one recalls distinguished scholars like Schopenhauer, Dr Paul Deussen and others, who had deeply studied Indian philosophy. What also strikes a chord in our memory is that the famous or infamous 'Aryan theory', propounded by the equally infamous Hitler, which had its reflections in Indian culture and history. One recalls distinguished contributions of modern German scientists like physicist Erwin Schrodinger.

This spiritual, historical and symbolic message was brought home to me in a vibrant manner when, musing over these aspects, I arrived at Idestein, my host's residence. I heard the resounding blow of conchs, which not only shook me up from my reverie, but also set a spiritual tone for my German visit. Devotees were welcoming a monk with the blowing of conchs in the traditional style. Perhaps still fresh from my experience of Islamic Kuwait, I

asked my hosts whether such public display like blowing of conchs—a loud proclamation of our traditions and customs in public—was permissible. I was reassured by my hosts that we were in a very friendly country having great appreciation for our cultural traditions.

Here I was in Frankfurt, at the invitation of Lipi Paul of the Stress Management Institute as the guest of Lipi and Amiya Paul. I spent 12 days in Germany and Austria and spoke at various places on several subjects including 'How to Overcome Mental

Tension'. I was happy to see the outstanding work being done by the Stress Management Institute, which is substantially managed by Indians.

Idestein and Wiesbaden, Germany

Idestein, where Lipi and Amiya Paul reside and Lipi has her Institute, is a beautiful suburb of Frankfurt, and the countryside is so scenic and beautiful that it reminded me of Shillong with which I had deep connections and have memorable recollections.

I went to Wiesbaden, a place near Frankfurt and at a 40-minute drive from Idestein, where Swami Yatiswaranandaji—who was a Vice-President of our Order—stayed during 1933-34. The only unfortunate part is that I could not locate the exact place of his stay. His daily lectures on different topics were compiled into a book by his beloved disciple Kurt Friedrichs of Hamburg, whom I had the pleasure of meeting. The book was brought out under the title *Readings on Swami Brahmananda's Spiritual Teachings*, which makes a powerful rendering and interpretation of Swami Brahmananda's teachings. It was quite a spiritual experience for me to sit at Wiesbaden and once again read this book. I also read another book, *Meditation and Spiritual Life*, by Swami Yatiswaranandaji. Mr

Cook Frederick Humberg is bringing out a magazine in German called *Vedanta*. They publish valuable articles like 'Spiritual Life' and 'Teachings of Swami Brahmananda' by Swami Prabhavananda, 'Mystirekha', articles about Swami Yatiswaranandaji, and *Mandukya Upanishad*.

When I saw all this and mused about the long, deep cultural and intellectual relationship between Germany and India, I felt deeply about the absence of a regular centre of the Ramakrishna Order in Germany. Of course, there is a private centre called the Bindweide Vedanta Society, where our swamis from different centres occasionally visit and participate in its various programmes.

That evening in Wiesbaden we had *arati* and guided meditation. I spoke on 'The Goal of Human Life and the Duties of Householders'. Mrs Lily Chakraborty, a German lady and treasurer of the Bindweide Vedanta Society, visited me and invited me to attend their seminar on 13 and 14 April 2001. I had a long discussion with her on how their centre could be affiliated to the Ramakrishna Order.

7 April 2001: The day commenced with the visit of several devotees. We spent the morning talking about Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji. I spent some part of the day in Frankfurt, Germany's oldest trade fair town on the River Main, and one of the most important trade places in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is an important hub of the European and international traffic system, located in Hesse. It is a busy and dynamic city with many skyscrapers, reminding one of the enterprise and diligence of the German people, known not only for their progress in technology, but also in the fields of art, literature and culture.

Visit to Austria and back to Germany

With Lipi, Amiya, Vandana and Arpita I reached Innsbruck in Austria at 6 pm on 7 April.

They had arranged accommodation for me in an international youth hostel, where we

spent the night. Next day, 8 April, I visited a church near the museum in Innsbruck. We went up on top of a tower there and had a panoramic view of the city.

Austria, whose culture and history are deeply interwoven with Germany, is a small and compact country. There is spectacular scenery around every corner. Austria has more castles and palaces open to visitors than any other country in Europe. It has venerable abbeys overlooking the Danube, wooded hills, lakes ringed by soaring mountains, glaciers and Alpine peaks reaching for the sky. Its great museums and churches harbour significant art treasures from many periods and styles.

We left Innsbruck in the afternoon and reached Salzburg at 4 pm. It is a most beautiful place known for its great scenery.

Austria is the homeland of great achievements in art and culture. Most significantly, Salzburg is the place where Wolfgang Mozart was born on 27 January 1756. A born genius, Mozart, even when he was three years old, began playing musical instruments (especially the harpsichord). By six he was composing music. Even before completing 30 years of age, he had composed great music in the typical style of great masters.

In the evening of 8 April, I visited Mozart's house. Later, we left for Munich and arrived there at 9:30 pm.

Munich

One of the principal reasons for my visit to Munich was to meet Dr Georg Lechner, the director of the Goethe Institute in Munich. The Goethe Institute has 145 cultural institutes in 78 countries and 18 branches in Germany itself. It teaches the German language abroad and also promotes international cultural co-operation. Goethe, as we all know, was a very interesting figure of the eighteenth century and occupies a respectable place in European literary history. He is widely regarded as Germany's greatest writer, the most talented man of his days, and amazingly versatile. Very in-



With the devotees at Bindwiede

terestingly, there is a mention of Goethe in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

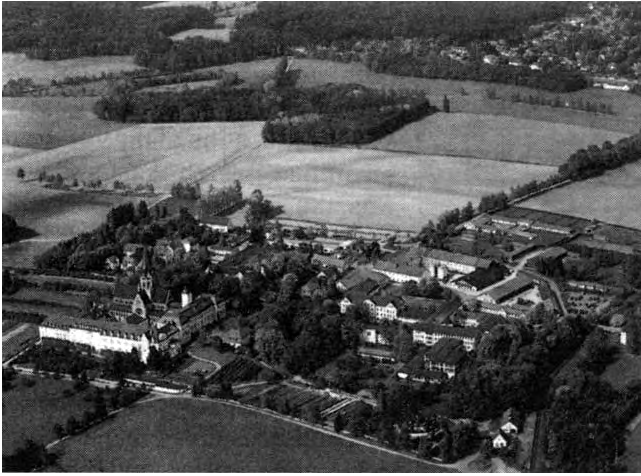
On 9 April, Dr Lechner met me at the youth hostel where I was put up in Munich, very interestingly called Hotel Pension! Accompanied by Dr Lechner, I went to a Benedictine monastery. On our way, we passed by a beautiful lake and enjoyed its scenic beauty and absorbed the serenity and peace the environment radiated.

The history of European monasticism is primarily the history of Benedictine monasteries. These monasteries have manifold abbeys and priories. Though there are differences between the monasteries, what is common to all of them is their adherence to the rule of St Benedict, which clearly lays down the basic principles of Benedictine monastic life and the obligation to observe them. However, the Benedictine confederation has a federal structure which allows each monastery and congregation the freedom to develop according to its own vocation within its particular religious and social environment. So there appears to be some scope for each monastery to express its own interpretation and implementation of the rule of St Benedict. King Ludwig I laid the cornerstone of the Basilica Monastery in 1835, and the Benedictine Monastery in Munich was consecrated in 1850. Apart from the recitation of the divine office, the monks were entrusted

especially with the pastoral work of the fast-growing population of the western part of Munich, as well as with education of the youth and scientific research. Pastoral work was the chief occupation of the monastery for the first half of its history. Later, in the 1970s, adult education programmes and youth work were taken up. Therefore, the monastery offers religious orientation in the middle of the great city and also gives material support to the homeless and the poor.

The head of the monastery, a 36-year-old abbot, Jeremias Schroder, OSB, of St Ottilien, received us. There are many monks in the monastery, some of them old. I was very much impressed by the serene countenance of the young abbot.

The monks then led me into the monastery for a meal. Two extremely interesting and significant facts struck me. One, the contrast between various monastic systems in their conventions and practices. Two, the great unity between monastics of different denominations all over the world. Contrast in conventions first. I was used to the conventions of our Order, where all of us monastic brothers dine together, and allow male householder devotees to join us for prasada in the dining hall. Of course, all householders are not allowed free access to all parts of monks' quarters. Nevertheless, householders are not treated as outsiders and summarily excluded, in striking contrast to the monastery in Munich. Dr Lechner, a householder, however distinguished and pious he was, however familiar he was with the monastics, was not allowed inside the monastic complex and I was taken alone to dine with the brothers. This monastic discipline impressed me. I was treated as an equal monastic brother and was allowed to integrate with them regardless of my faith! This reflects the great truth we have always learnt from Sri Ramakrishna, that those who have



A view of the Benedictine Monastery

dedicated their life to service of God by taking sannyasa, are all united at some point regardless of the paths they have chosen.

The abbot asked me about my food preference. Naturally I said I would have only vegetarian food, some boiled vegetables and all that. I had some bread and tea also. During the meal, another contrast with our style impressed me. Unlike us, there was silence during the meal, no talking except for some read-

ing from the Bible all through. With their permission, I took some snaps and one of the brothers also took a group photo. I was eager to study their monastic life. After the meal I was taken to various rooms, all simple. We then exchanged books. I got a huge and voluminous book, *Benedictine Monastery*. Between 2 pm and 3:45 pm that day, we had a meaningful dialogue about our respective monastic orders. I discovered that the essential vows like chastity, poverty and obedience are the same in both the Orders. Dr Lechner also joined us in this meeting, which was held at a place where householders

were also permitted.

It was teatime. I had tea with the monks in the dining hall. It was a wonderful, and significantly meaningful visit. I thanked our dear abbot and took leave of him and the other brothers of the monastery.

(to be continued)

The Bank Account of Life

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with Rs 86,400.

It carries over no balance from day to day; allows you to keep no cash balance; every night deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day.

What would you do with such an account? Draw out *every* paisa, of course!!!

Every one of us has such a 'bank'. Its name is TIME. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against tomorrow. You must live in the present—on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success!

The clock is running. Make the most of *today!!*

Kena Upaniṣad

SWAMI BANESHANANDA

The *Kena Upaniṣad* is serially placed as second after the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. The great importance of the Upaniṣad can be inferred from the fact that Sankara has written two commentaries on it. Not satisfied with the word-for-word exposition, he again wrote a commentary with stress on logic while elaborating on the ideas conveyed by the sentences.

This Upaniṣad forms part of the Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa of the Talavakāra branch of the *Sāma Veda*. The earlier chapters of this Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa deal with rites and also *upāsana*s (meditations) meant for those aspirants who are not competent to renounce all to take up the path of *jñāna*. The Upaniṣad begins from its ninth chapter.

The Most Significant Question

The Upaniṣad starts with the word *kena*, which indicates a revolutionary question not about a 'what' or 'why' that belongs to the field of science and philosophy, but about 'who' (*kena*, 'by whom') which includes all—science, psychology, philosophy, theology and spirituality. This brings to light the competence of the student; he has been dissatisfied with the hollowness or apparent reality of the world.

The term *kena* shows that the critical investigation called epistemology started in India long, long ago. The Upaniṣad, while discussing the realization of *pratibodha*, says that our mind has got the power to comprehend the Reality. With each and every modification of the mind, Brahman is revealed. It is an object of the *vr̥tti*, ie it can be encompassed by the mind; but cannot be encompassed by the *phala*, the reflection, the *jīva*. The *jīva* which is already a reflection cannot have further reflection. The Infinite Brahman can be reflected in the *vr̥tti*s, even though the *vr̥tti*s themselves

are limited. The conclusion, therefore, is that the finite mind has got the capacity to comprehend the Infinite Reality.

This critical question also marks a departure from long-cherished dogmatic or theological beliefs. When philosophy matures, it paves the way for questioning the very basis of knowledge. By such questioning dogmatic belief in theology is shaken. It is not refuting the basis of theology or philosophy, but it is an opportunity for reaffirming the belief with the conviction arising out of knowledge. There are two divisions of knowledge: one is unreliable knowledge which is acquired by the senses, and the other, the knowledge that transcends the senses, helping them to reveal each and every bit of knowledge. The question *kena*, therefore, carries much strength. It comes out of the student's sincere enquiry.

The Competence of the Student

The student does not lament, 'What will happen to my near and dear ones, what will happen to the world, if I die?' All questions of a personal nature will die with me. Then why not ask the question about the Self which is eternal in me—about myself, about 'who I am'. The real question should be about knowing the knower, to know what is within. Because, when we try to look at this world through the doorway of the senses, the world appears different, coloured by the colours of the senses. I look at this world from my own point of view and others, from theirs. But if we can know something by which we can know the whole of existence, that would be real and complete knowledge. The *Kena Upaniṣad* discusses a question which arises from a practical enquiry. It is not based on any belief, theological or philosophical. Therefore, the teacher can quench the thirst of the student with a proper

answer. This is the best type of question one can ask after knowing the world to be transitory. Thus, this questioner is qualified and competent (*pramātā*) because his question finds its culmination in him (*svāntah*), not somewhere outside.

‘God exists’ is a reality because many people have affirmed it. Suppose I see smoke on a hill. I know instantaneously that there is fire. If somebody coming from that hill tells me, ‘Yes, I have seen that there is fire’, it gives me conviction that my postulate is correct. Therefore, ‘God exists’ is a reality because the scriptures say so and many people who have experienced God also vouch for it. Another reality is that I exist; I do not require anybody’s help to believe that I exist. These are two realities. The idea that ‘God exists’ is my information, my belief. On the other hand, *my* existence does not depend on any belief. This knowledge about the existence of God has to be converted into realization. It is not the question of proving or disproving God with the help of logic or philosophy; it is *knowing* God. In the case of the analogy of fire and smoke, I can know from others who have seen the fire that there is fire on the hill. I can know from my inference that, as smoke is visible so there is fire. Yet it will become realization or right knowledge (*pramā* or *yathārtha jñāna*) when I go to the hill and see with my own eyes that there is fire. That requires personal effort called *puruṣakāra*.

The student of the *Kena Upaniṣad* puts everything—belief, information and philosophy—under critical examination. This is called *vidyā*, *adhyātma vidyā*. *Adhi* plus *ātmā* is *adhyātma*, the locus of my Atman. Sri Krishna says in the *Gītā*, ‘*Adhyātma-vidyā vidyānam, adhyātma vidyā* is the best among all the branches of knowledge’, because it enquires about the enquirer who is not distanced by time and space—it is in me and ever present. The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* says that the *jīva* in the *puruṣa* and the Self in the sun are one, because they are not separated by time and space, they are one and the same. The *ṛṣis* in olden days

used to think that the sun was the most powerful thing in this world. Because of the sun all life on the earth was possible. So they took the sun for a god, the highest God. The *sāvitrī gāyatrī* is in remembrance of *savitā*, the sun.

Catch the Mind

The *manas*, mind, is the representative of all the senses. If we catch the mind, it will be able to reveal many things. As a result, the mind is brought into focus for releasing it from its bondage to the sense-bound finiteness, and transforming it into infinite awareness. The mind then learns to have the awareness of this reality. Sri Ramakrishna says *mānuṣ* is *mān* and *hūṇṣ*. *Mān* is *parimāṇa*, limit or possibility or value. The mind has these two aspects: limitedness and infinite possibility. The scriptures say: ‘*Mana eva manuṣyānām kāraṇam bandha-mokṣayoḥ*, the mind is the cause for our bondage as well as for our *mokṣa*, liberation.’ This awareness is an awareness of the infinite possibility which is behind the limited mind and we have to know it. And when this mind is cleansed, it will illumine its dark crevices and bring into focus its higher dimensions and capacities. So with our experiences: our experience of the phenomenal world help us understand its limitedness.

Sri Ramakrishna says, ‘I do not want to be sugar, I want to eat sugar.’ Somebody quipped, ‘Brahman is not insentient like sugar that you can eat it.’ It seems a contradictory idea, but we may ask the question, ‘Then what is it like?’ To answer this we have to take recourse to an abstract or material analogy. The famous snake-rope analogy of Sankara does not prove that Brahman is insentient like a rope! We have to give an analogy of something which is of this world. With the experiences of this world we will start our journey and purify our mind. Isn’t that what is called the sharpening of the mind? A mind trained in the art of Vedanta (*agryā buddhi*) cuts its bonds.

Justification for a Question-Answer Style

A doubt may arise that the Upaniṣads are

generally very serious: they discuss serious problems about the Noumenon, the existence of the Self and the non-existence of this dual world; but here we find that the Upaniṣad has adopted a rather easy question-answer style. The answer to this doubt is: here it is shown that it is an applied course. When we are studying under the guidance of a teacher who is able to demonstrate the truth of his teaching in our presence, it does not call for polemical discussions. The *Pañcadaśī* says: '*svānubhūti anusāreṇa tarkyatām, mā kutarkyatām*, conduct discussion according to your own realization, but don't apply baseless logic.' The *Kena Upaniṣad* encourages this kind of dialogue. The *Gītā* idea of *kena* (asked by Arjuna in '*Atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ*') tries to trace some agent who is causing the mind to do sinful acts. But here the student is not trying to pass the buck onto somebody. He knows from his experience that there are agents who direct people for some purposes, like a teacher directing the student, or a king wishing a work to be performed by his agents. The student in the *Kena Upaniṣad* wants to know about a director whose very presence as a witness is the cause of actions. There is an analogy of a *cakora* bird. The bird was kept in front of the food which was to be served to the king. The colour of the bird's eyes would change into red if there was poison in the food. As a result, partaking of the food by the king depended on the presence of the bird. At the same time, the bird is not doing anything to direct the king to have or not to have food! So *sannidhi mātrena*, by mere presence, the willingness to eat the food on the part of the king is brought about.

The student of the *Kena Upaniṣad* does not want to know the answer from any imaginary standpoint. He tries, as we shall see later, to know it for himself, not through a proxy. He understands the reality and hardship that accompanies such an undertaking. Someone standing at sea level sees a man trying to climb a hill. As he tries to climb, at almost every step he falls. Again he climbs; again he falls. He is

trying to climb higher and higher. The person who is standing below thinks, 'How foolish it is!' Yes, foolish indeed! While he is trying he may have falls—though the falls are at a level higher than the ground level. But the one on the ground has nowhere to fall! A person who wants to jump across a stream may take a few steps backwards. But that is to gain speed to clear the stretch in one bound.

The Most Fitting Reply

We say that this is the best type of question a spiritual aspirant may ask of a guru. The guru also rose to the occasion and gave a very fitting answer. Yet, when we read the answer it seems so baffling: it is not a direct answer. A direct answer quells all doubts in the mind of the student, and so he becomes *niṣpraśna*, questionless. That determines the fitness of the guru. But here we find that the guru says: '*Śrotrasya śrotarāṁ, manaso mano yat*, that which is the ear of the ear, mind of the mind,' etc. What is the meaning of this riddle?

Suppose I know that since I am endowed with the power of hearing, I can hear when a sound is produced. This is the potency or capability of my sense organs. The senses are able to bring in some data from outside which they have the strength to cognize. *Śrotrasya śrotarāṁ* is that which is the cause of such cognition even like the *cakora* bird in the analogy referred to already. The Atman or the Self is the cause because without it a body is dead and therefore cannot hear or have any other perception. The story of the Yakṣa narrated later in this Upaniṣad also explains this riddle. When the gods won the battle against the demons they became elated with the idea that they had won the battle on their own. Brahman had to appear before the gods in an enigmatic form which they could not recognize, and then Umā Haimavati had to appear to tell them that Brahman was the cause of their victory. Following the *arundhati nyāya*¹ we catch the sound first, which leads us to the senses, then to the *sāmarthyā*, the capability of the senses. Finally we are able to discover that

there is something as the witness even behind this capability of the senses that is responsible for the cognition. This something is called the Atman. Sri Ramakrishna, with his inimitable analogy says that it is like proceeding along the chain link by link and finally reaching the submerged log to which the chain is tied.

'I know that I know you' means 'I know you' is a knowledge of mine. The first *know* is the knowledge (cognizer) of the second *know*. Similarly when I say 'I know that I do not know you', I mean that 'I do not know you' is a knowledge of mine, though it is a negative knowledge. Here also the first *know* is the knowledge (cognizer) of the second *know*. The first *know* in both the sentences can never be a negative one. Even when there is no subordinate clause to follow, this first *know* will not cease to exist; it will merge into the 'I' of the principal clause, which is the Atman. In this process if we go from subtle to subtler and on to the subtlest, we can reach that Atman. That is why it is seen by the sharpened intellect (*dṛśyate tu agryayā buddhyā*).

The Difficulty in Knowing and Teaching

Then the guru says: '*Na vidmo na vijānimo yathaitat anuśīyāt*, I do not know this Atman, so I do not know how to teach about this Atman.' The idea is: The Atman has no characteristic feature like *jāti* or colour to offer as signs so that people can know it. *Jāti* means group. Suppose there are cows; they belong to *go-jāti*. How? Because cows have some unique characteristic features which are unique to their species which differentiates them from horses or other animals. Brahman has no *jāti*, no colour or profession. So we cannot know Brahman.

As a result the teacher confesses: I do not know how to teach you the knowledge of Brahman. Because there are no direct proofs of Brahman by which I can teach you about it. If we accept direct perception (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa*), we cannot perceive Brahman because the *śruti* says: 'The eyes cannot go there (*na tatra cakṣurgacchatī*).' *Anumāna*, inference,

also fails because there is no insignia of Brahman, like smoke when fire is inferred. *Upamāna*, analogy, also fails because no example (*pratimā*) of Brahman is possible in this world by which we can show a similarity or likeness. *Arthāpatti*—objection against the literary meaning and therefore deriving a different meaning from circumstantial evidence—also fails. The sentence 'Fat Devadatta does not eat during the day' means that he eats at night. *Anupalabdhi* also fails. One who has got a son realizes the absence (non-perception or *anupalabdhi*) of the son when he is away somewhere.

The Āgama Pramāṇa

Since Brahman is not knowable, is it fruitless to learn about something which is unknowable? No. Brahman is to be known by the *āgamas*, the *śāstras*, by verbal testimony or testimony of the scriptures (*upanīṣadam puruṣam*). There is a beautiful story: A man has become a monkey in his dream. He is in a troop of monkeys. He feels thirsty and tries to get some water but cannot. Finally he feels so thirsty that in his sleep he starts moaning. Somebody hears him moaning and calls out his name, which breaks his sleep. It is only a word that brings him back to wakefulness. Similarly, the verbal testimony, the *āgamas*, the scriptures, awake us to our real nature.

The scripture helps us in two ways. One, it comes from the mouth of the teacher (*iti śuśrūma pūrveṣāṃ*). Two, it directly teaches the reader who would study it. See the earnestness of the teacher to teach something that eludes the grasp of language. He says, 'I want to tell you, but I do not know the language.' It is said that when the student asks some questions the teacher answers in his (student's) language (*tadbhāṣayā uttaram brūte śruti śrotr-hitaīṣiṇi*). Suppose, stretching both his arms, the student asks, 'Tell me whether the tiger is so big.' The teacher has now found some means to tell him, 'No, it is not *that* big, but *this* big' (the teacher also stretches his arms to show the length). Sri Ramakrishna said to

Vidyasagar that all the *śāstras* have become defiled for they are uttered by the tongue, but Brahman is not.² Nobody has been able to speak about Brahman with the help of language.

A Unique Communication System

We use the wireless, Internet, telephone and the like as systems of communication. We wonder what type of communication system the ancients developed to impart the knowledge of Brahman. They had a unique way of communicating. We find in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*³ the teacher using a foolproof method of communication. He tells the student: 'Bring a fruit of the banyan tree (*nyagrodha-phalam āhara*).' The student brings the fruit. 'Break it', orders the teacher. 'What do you find in it?' The student does not find any seed there, but only a powder-like substance. At the instruction of the teacher, the student again breaks a minute grain but finds nothing. 'From such an invisible grain such a big banyan tree is created. Likewise the whole creation has Brahman as its seed', the teacher affirms. Yet the teacher does not feel satisfied. He says further, 'Please bring a pinch of salt.' The student does that. The teacher tells him: 'Put it into a bowl of water and come tomorrow morning.' The next day the student is not able to find the salt in the solution. The teacher says, 'Now taste a little of this water.' The student tastes and confirms, 'Yes, there is salt in this.' How does he know that it is there? Each and every drop of water is salty; the salt permeates the entire bowl of water (*sarvaṁ khalvidam brahma*). Through this communication system the student is able to understand. This is a methodology of imparting knowledge which enables the student to experience the truth himself. It is the best, because it leaves no room for doubt arising out of a gap between theory and practice. The teacher cannot teach the student; the student has to get the knowledge himself. Books may not create any impulses in the mind of a mere reader, but scriptures do so in the heart of a devoted stu-

dent. It is a process of manifestation and not of acquisition. Manifestation is intimate. But acquisition is alien; so it tends to nurture gaps between internal and external nature. Acquisition is like a covering, while manifestation is like a discovery.

Now the teacher of the Upaniṣad raises a doubt: 'If you think that I have thus discussed the whole gamut of the knowledge of Brahman, and that you have understood it properly, then you have understood little of Brahman.' This is a very amazing statement. Because the teacher should be happy when the student says, 'Yes, I have known Brahman, whatever you have taught I have understood.' But here the teacher discards the student's knowledge. The word *yadi* (if) holds the key to this statement. This is actually the teacher's argument. His experience is that when he teaches, some students understand things properly while others don't. Again, some students may not understand anything at all and still some others may understand it otherwise. Therefore, he wants to ascertain whether this student has fully understood it.

Moreover, we generally see that if the teacher finds the student has understood a topic, he passes on to the next topic. But there is no next topic with the knowledge of Brahman! It is the last. And the student should satisfactorily confirm, 'Yes, I have understood it properly.' Then the teacher will be happy, because after this there is nothing else to be known; it is the ultimate knowledge one could have. So the teacher is trying to stimulate the student's mind to know whether he has understood it properly.

But he says, '*dabhrameva*, this is little indeed,' because if we accept the validity of the knowledge acquired by the senses, that would be very little. Suppose I know you. It is not full knowledge. For I may know you outwardly, but I cannot know your mind, I cannot know what is inside you. As a result, my knowledge of you is limited. But the knowledge (the first 'know' as shown earlier in the sentence 'I know that I know you') behind the statement 'I

know you', is actual knowledge. If the student refers to the second knowledge, then that knowledge is very little. But if he speaks about the knowledge which is referred to by the first 'know', then it is right knowledge, and the teacher wants to hear that. 'When one reflects, then indeed one understands. Without reflection one does not understand.'⁴

The student grasps the seriousness of the matter, practises spiritual disciplines to understand the meaning, and finally comes to convey the happy message, 'Yes, I have understood it.'

Now a question crosses our mind: How do you know? The students are always ready to complain that teachers are not able to teach; that they are not competent to teach because they cannot find any words to relate that knowledge. But now when the teacher wants to know from the student, the student, though he enthusiastically admits that he knows it, fails to relate that knowledge. His answer also comes out in the form of a riddle. He says, 'I do not think that I know it properly. At the same time I cannot say that I do not know it.'

A Tough Stand Taken by the *Śruti*

It is at this juncture that we come to a very important part of this Upaniṣad. So long the Upaniṣad has taken great trouble to explain the Reality to the student, to people who want to know whether there is a thing called Brahman. Now the Upaniṣad throws down the gauntlet, saying, as it were: 'Enough of this childishness! I have taken so much trouble to convince you that there is an absolute Reality called Brahman, that it is the eternal Witness. We are not required to prove the existence of Brahman. Rather, you disprove the existence of Brahman! That responsibility I transfer to you. Let me see how you disprove it.'

It cannot be disproved. Because, if we disprove the existence of Brahman, we disprove that we exist, that we are conscious, and that we have a feeling of bliss! Because Brahman is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. *Pratibodha-viditam* means: with each and every

modification of our mind, with each and every bit of our consciousness we know it, we feel that it exists. The student is not able to counter this argument, because if he counters he becomes non-existent. And when he is himself non-existent, his questions have no validity.

The Upaniṣad ends its discussion by saying, that if one realizes this Truth in this very life, then one's life is fulfilled, otherwise there is the danger of having to meet with destruction time and again.

The Story

After a very serious course of training, the *śruti* now tells a story. Once the gods (*devas*) defeated the demons (*asuras*) in battle. This was perhaps the first time that the gods defeated the demons! We know of many wars where the gods were repeatedly defeated by the demons and lost their heavenly kingdom and everything. Naturally the gods felt elated at the success, which they attributed to their own prowess. At that time there appeared in front of them a mysterious being, a Yakṣa. Agni, the fire god, is the mouthpiece of the gods, because he carries to them all the oblations. He was sent to know who this figure was. The Yakṣa asked for his introduction. Agni said, 'I am Agni, I am Jātaveda'. Acharya Sankara says Jātaveda means he who knows (*veti*) something as soon as it comes into being (*jātam*). The Yakṣa wanted to know about his prowess. Agni said that he could burn everything. Thus Agni expressed his arrogance as well as his ignorance. He said that he was Jātaveda, whereas he did not know the Yakṣa! However, the Yakṣa gave him a piece of straw and asked him to burn it. Agni failed and returned to his companions. Vāyu was sent then, who also failed to prove his worth, as he could not blow away the piece of straw placed before him! Then at last, Indra, the leader of the gods, went to meet the Yakṣa. But before Indra could reach him, the Yakṣa disappeared. He did not even talk with Indra. Flabbergasted, Indra stood rooted to the spot wondering about the Yakṣa. Then Umā Haimāvati

appeared before him and said that the Yakṣa was none but Brahman itself. The glory of winning the battle of which the gods felt boastful, in reality, goes to Brahman.

Conclusion

In this way the Upaniṣad illustrates *sākṣitva*, the witness-nature of Brahman. This is the great contribution of the *Kena Upaniṣad*. In the process of trying to understand the subtlety of the logic about the *sākṣitva* of Brahman, one may perhaps get a rare glimpse of that state where it shines as the eternal Witness. Even though it is an intellectual understanding and not actual realization, this understanding has got unlimited prospects for a beginner in spiritual life. *Svalpam-apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*, even a little of

this spirituality will save us from great fear (of destruction).⁵ *

Notes and References

1. Arundhati is a tiny star near the sixth star of the constellation called Saptarṣi. To show such a small star to a person who does not know it, we first show him the seventh star, then the sixth, then ask him to concentrate around it and find the tiny star below.
2. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1985), p. 102.
3. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.12.1-3 and 6.13.1-3.
4. *Yadā vai manute atha vijānāti. Na amatvā vijānāti.* —*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.18.1.
5. *Bhagavadgītā*, 2.40.

Strength, the Remedy for Weakness

Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life; strength, it says, strength, O man, be not weak. Are there no human weaknesses?—says man. There are, say the Upanishads, but will more weakness heal them, would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin, weakness cure weakness? Strength, O man, strength, say the Upanishads, stand up and be strong. Ay, it is the only literature in the world where you find the word ‘Abhih’, ‘fearless’, used again and again; in no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or to man. Abhih, fearless! And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great Emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the bank of the Indus, talking to one of our Sannyasins in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor, astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold, and smiles at his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his authority as an Emperor, says, ‘I will kill you if you do not come’, and the man burst into a laugh and says, ‘You never told such a falsehood in your life, as you tell just now. Who can kill me? Me you kill, Emperor of the material world! Never! For I am Spirit unborn and undecaying: never was I born and never do I die; I am the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient; and you kill me, child that you are!’ That is strength, that is strength!

—Swami Vivekananda (CW, 3. 237-8)

Peace in the World: Prospects and Proposals

CATHERINE STONE

We are all human beings, and we have all suffered pain in our lives at the hands of other human beings, pain which could justify anger or hatred in return. Some of us do indulge the passions of revenge and 'an eye for an eye'. However, in Nature's household such action does not result in happiness, progress or peace. There is a time in the life cycles of each soul when the individual intelligence recognizes that returning pain for pain only increases the amount of pain in the world. There is a time when the soul decides it has suffered enough, does not desire to add suffering to the world, and so pursues the path of peace.

For me that time came after being almost beaten to death by my son's father. I knew then that violence could not be rationalized, that it was destructive to life and to the healthy unfoldment of innocent children. I escaped from that man, to raise my son in peace, love and wisdom. I realized that I could not change the world, but I could change myself. I decided to look at what I did have control over: as a woman in the state of California, USA, I had complete control over my body, if I desired to exercise that control. Being a lover of liberty, I took up the challenge and decided that in my world, the universe of my body and my energetic relationships with life as it contacted my consciousness, I would be as non-violent as possible. I read the *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. I became a vegetarian. I attempted to transform my use of language so that I did not broadcast expressions of violence in war-like similes. Spanking my son was not an option. Angry or irritable outbursts were no longer my indulgences. Yes, I was tested, and yes, I often fell short of my goals, although not in the area of violence to my son. Persistent conviction in

the nobility of the vision of non-violence eventually resulted in transformation in my personal life. I began to reap what I had sown. The time of testing passed, my life became intensely joyous as I fulfilled my obligations to my son and attempted to develop my own character.

That harmony has continued to grow, fuelled by my desire to know more about how Nature's law works. I discovered that Nature is not inimical to humanity. Rather, she is a doting mother, gently pressing us to evolve, hinting to us to eschew emotionalism and follow the guiding light of the soul, in rational pursuit of truth. I found that Nature has a set of moral laws to her human children because they alone possess the independent powers of reason and choice, the will and the intelligence to cooperate with Her in creative partnership. I found that morality is the foundation of all spiritual advancement, and that self-control and personal responsibility form the foundation of individual soul unfoldment. I learned that each person must forge her or his own principles of ethics, based upon experience and knowledge. No two individuals' standards will be exactly alike, just as no two people are exactly alike. Nevertheless a substratum of common values must be established globally, the foundation of our common humanity. Basic ethical principles are taught by example. The way is not easy. Yet there is no nobler achievement than 'the great work' of character building, to erect the temple 'not made with nails' wherein the living soul dwells in majesty.

All paths lead to God, and some souls travel quickly and some take their time. Humanity is a huge family. But we are all 'in-laws'—we live absolutely subject to Nature's laws, irrespective of our knowledge and

beliefs. Inner peace comes to the individual who obeys Nature's laws. From that individual radiate ordered thought forms, constructive creativity, and beneficence of a human being at peace with herself and the world. Each human being in this state is able to harmonize and cooperate with many people. The growth of harmony and cooperation, the increase of sharing, of empathic connections, of educational opportunity without regard to gender, age, caste, ethnicity or religion—all these signal the spread of peace in the world.

It is a curious fact that you can only perceive what you are. When you are filled with conflict and negativity, the world appears a terrible place. As you train yourself to become more healthy and constructive, the whole world seems to become more hopeful and pleasant. At one time, I was filled with fear and foreboding about the future. When I look at humanity now, I see excellent prospects for peace. Today, ever-increasing numbers of individuals are taking responsibility to become centres of focused attention for the highest good of all living, implementing their knowledge and resources for community service. To you who read this, the prospects for peace may appear differently or they may approximate my own. Nevertheless, for the first time in human history, year 2000 was named the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and the years 2001-2010 are to be the International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/2000.htm). Imagine the number of individuals who worked to make that idea manifest!

We now have a global ideal—a Culture of Peace—to which we may aspire. This is the most potent of all proposals on the table for humanity's consideration. If we can establish a global ethic, a foundation of shared values to embrace the sanctity of life and the rights of all peoples, we shall have achieved a major evolutionary advance. When violence is no longer an option with humanity, we will have become trustworthy in the universe. We will also

be able to trust each other, and children will be assured of their birthright to a healthy lifetime filled with abundant opportunities for education, right livelihood and creativity.

The master John Richardson, founder of the Great School of Natural Science (www.school-of-natsci.org) said that the brotherhood of man would be achieved when the millions of individual intelligences 'exemplified moral accountability in the mutual discharge of (their) personal responsibility.' That's our coming of age. Humanity is moving out of childhood and into the age of responsibility. Slowly we move, painfully we secure a higher foothold on the mountain of attainment, yet we are progressing. One by one we move forward, inevitably, irreversibly, eternally. The great ones who have gone before say there is no end. And if they could not see an end from their exalted outposts, who are we to imagine one?

There is a theory which states that when a critical mass of consciousness has been attained, a global shift will occur. If this is a scientific statement, then each individual who transforms herself into a peaceful, healthy, moral person knows that she is adding to the increment needed to ground a global Culture of Peace. I use the feminine pronoun because women are the mothers of humanity and of nations. Women are the teachers of all men, because there is no man who has not come to this earth through the body of a woman, who has not been cradled in a woman's arms as a babe, and who has not learned his first lessons in the new life from a woman. Of course I am aware of neglect and exceptional circumstances, but for the vast majority of humanity, this is true. What is not generally recognized is the power of a woman in being the teacher of humankind. An enlightened, intelligent, compassionate woman can bring up a god-man or a god-woman. Woman holds and nurses her child and creates the first bond of unconditional love with that soul. Scientists state that this first relationship colours all subsequent ones. If a woman teaches by her own example

non-violence, unconditional love, empathic reciprocal behaviour, unalloyed delight in the beauties of nature, reverence for all living, and humour at the foibles of humanity, her child will develop as a noble, compassionate, intelligent being. All children are born to be such. It is our ignorant parenting which warps their natures and prevents them from attaining their potentials.

The scientific truth of these statements has been championed and demonstrated by a remarkable woman doctor, Dr Martha Welch of New York City. She is both a psychiatrist and a neuroscientist, and her work has centred around re-establishing the bond between mother and child in cases of autism and extreme behaviour problems often associated with adopted children or children who have been abused or neglected. Dr Welch developed a therapy called Holding Therapy, which accomplishes in an intense few hours what years of traditional therapy cannot (<http://marthawelch.com>). I have witnessed this on three separate occasions. Dr Welch trains family therapists and treats groups of families where she is invited to work, worldwide. The results are uniformly positive and dramatic. The therapy is simple and anyone can do it: the mother holds her child. Most effective is if the mother's mother can be persuaded to come and hold her daughter first.

Holding tight the beloved, with unconditional love and the assurance that anything that is felt can be spoken and expressed without violence or fear of subsequent retribution, initiates a natural consequence of emotions, leading up to permanent bonding. First there is confrontation between the two: needs have not been met, anger or fear is built up, waiting to explode. As the holding proceeds, the therapists and friendly supporters surrounding the

mother and child (of whatever generation) encourage the child to express her feelings, to shout, to cry, to empty herself of what has been held back. The mother is also encouraged to respond to the child's expressions, so that there is a period of conflict and crying, rejection, criticism, surprise, shock, anger, fear and disgust while the two vent their negativity into the safe network of loving friends. Yes, the family secrets pour out, and yes there are shocks and horrors, but the process promises that once these wounds are expressed and aired, they will have a chance to heal. The process guarantees the child that there is nothing she can say which will stop her mother from loving her.

It has been truly observed that the measure of a society is determined by its treatment of women. And it goes both ways: only a society that honours and values its women will develop to its full cultural potential.

The group helps the mother to understand her power and her responsibility, and to better understand her child's needs. The mother is encouraged to do certain things that trigger the brain peptides which cause bonding, such as gently licking the child's face, nuzzling and kissing. A disconnected child will react with disgust, not liking the mother's smell, resisting her body fluids, rejecting the mother's love. The group encourages the mother to persist, and eventually there is a breakthrough, with the aid of brain chemistry, and resolution occurs. Mother and child melt into each other's arms, hearts beating as one, and breathing together. Both are suffused with love and happiness, and they do not wish to separate. The holding breaks through the stored negativity in both and, once resolution is achieved, a new biochemical environment exists in both mother and child which changes them permanently. It is indeed awe-inspiring to witness average families experience a new state of unconditional love for each other.

The state of being bonded in unconditional love to another human being induces

lasting empathic behaviour. Never again can that person consciously hurt another, because she feels the pain as her own. And, because she has experienced a healthy reciprocal relationship, she does not confuse pain with pleasure or prefer pain over not feeling anything at all. Asocial behaviour ceases. Intelligence and the ability to learn increase. Desire to help and cooperate becomes part of the personality. Meanness, irritability, selfishness, fear—all disappear from the psyche as if by magic. A healthy bonding between mother and child, between mother and grandmother, grandmother and grandchild, between mother and father, and father and child heals the family and makes a dark broken family molecule into a loving unit of radiant light.

Since I have now seen this occur on three separate occasions, with eight diverse families each time, I postulate that unconditional love is hidden behind our cranky, depressed personalities. We all possess this deep reservoir of compassion—it is our human heritage. But we lose sight of it in the struggles to survive our childhoods, the efforts to make a living, the conflicts in the relationships of everyday life. We become mean-spirited, inconsiderate, selfish, irritable, and our noble souls are obscured. We wish that our children would raise themselves—we don't want to be bothered with staying at home, helping them with homework, making food for them and playing games with them. We leave that to servants, or to schools, or to the children themselves. We gallop to keep pace with our career paths in the mistaken idea that this is the most important work of our lives. Bringing up a healthy, whole, loving child is the most important work on the planet. The child you present to the world is your contribution to our collective future.

Mothers are the cornerstone of a Culture

of Peace. Mothers have the power to create peace-loving human beings, and with a critical mass of mothers doing so, this world will be inhabited by peace-loving adults in a few years. Our current values discount the labour of women. So-called 'women's work' is not even counted in the economic systems of today, although it is women who work from dawn to dusk, holding families together, keeping children fed and clothed, thus ensuring the survival of societies worldwide. Men work only a fraction of the time that women labour. In many societies marriage is based upon the idea that a wife is little more than a slave, someone who will work for her husband until the day she dies, dependent upon him for any money, sometimes even for permission to leave the house.

**All children are our children.
The homeless, the poor, the
uneducated are the raw
materials and the natural
resources of humanity.
Human consciousness is our
greatest jewel, in all its
diversity.**

The rights of women and recognition of the work they do, especially as creators and nurturers of life, must be established in order for Cultures of Peace to flourish. Women should be supported as mothers, and honoured for successfully bringing up whole,

healthy, intelligent children. What greater benefit is there to society? It has been truly observed that the measure of a society is determined by its treatment of women. And it goes both ways: only a society that honours and values its women will develop to its full cultural potential. It can be safely asserted that no society as yet fully honours and supports its women.

Consider the following scenario: motherhood is treated as the most sacred trust in the world, and young women who desire motherhood are carefully educated and prepared for their future duties. Those who do not wish to be mothers are equally honoured, and the creative work that they choose is regarded as their 'child' and contribution to the world. Each woman is free to choose her mate, or to

remain single. When a woman becomes pregnant, the entire community rallies to support her, making sure she has everything she needs, making sure everything is provided for the arrival of the new child. The wishes of the individual woman are held sacred, and her preference for where she will give birth is carefully respected, with every detail being attended to, so that she will feel as comfortable and safe as possible. All efforts are expended to make sure the birth is successful for both mother and child. When the baby is born, she or he is placed at the mother's breast immediately, so that sucking can begin, colostrum be received, and the breast-milk induced. The mother is allowed to rest and recover from her labour, and the child is kept always at her breast, and beside her in bed, so that the bond between them is established from the start. After the baby is about three weeks old, the mother brings her or him to a gathering of the community, where the child is formally introduced and welcomed. The newly incarnated soul is greeted with profound respect and appreciation by everyone, and then the mother is allowed to speak her dreams for this child. The officials note every detail of what she sees and dreams, and this becomes the duty of the community to fulfil. The mother is honoured as the sacred guardian of this soul. The father is honoured for his loving support of the mother, and for his active participation in parenting. As the child grows, different people in the community voluntarily obligate themselves to provide the opportunities which the mother saw for this child. Everyone cooperates to make life for this new member of the community as rich and filled with loving interaction as possible. Education is highly valued, in the sciences as well as the arts, including painting, poetry and music. Sports are taught at an early age, so that each child will learn teamwork and self-discipline in training her or his physi-

cal body. Every life occupation and duty is taught, with wisdom and enlightened methods. Violence is unknown. Sickness is extremely rare. So-called accidents hardly ever occur. Each child knows that she or he is beloved of the community and an integral unit within society, welcomed, honoured and supported by everyone.

Contrast this scenario with what we often find in today's societies, and you will understand better why our youth are disaffected, disconnected, and seemingly adrift in the ocean of life. All children are our children. The homeless, the poor, the uneducated are the raw materials and the natural resources of humanity. Human consciousness is our greatest jewel, in all its diversity. When fulfilling the needs of all peoples is recognized to be our highest priority as well as our best defence against violence and unrest, science and technology will make an exponential leap forward. When there is no longer a question of whether a discovery will be used for destruction, and the desire to control and enslave others has been squelched, real cultural advances will occur. When the children of the world are all nurtured by loving mothers or other caretakers, the potentials for health, universal abundance and happiness will be realized. Earth will be transformed, and the past millennium will be recalled as an age of darkness. Light will have dawned in our minds, and love will rule our hearts.

This is the dream of all mothers and all children, and it is the plan of Nature and Nature's God. The sooner we align ourselves with the flow of the evolutionary life force the better. We have the dispensation of the decade of 2001-10 to develop our new values and establish priorities in order to build Cultures of Peace in all the world's religions. Our united wills-to-good will accomplish it. May God bless our efforts. *

Don't worry about what others are thinking of you. They are busy worrying about what you are thinking of them.

Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda— Two Kindred Souls

DR BHUPENDRANATH SEAL

Both Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda carried the message of Vedanta to distant parts of the world. Their mission in the West was to disseminate India's spiritual culture. Swami Vivekananda gave the world the message of Vedanta, based on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, but without highlighting his name. Swami Abhedananda too followed in his footsteps and preached Vedanta in America successfully.

These two great monks were intimate with their master Sri Ramakrishna, who was attracted to both of them when they visited him first. Naren (Swami Vivekananda) and Kali (Swami Abhedananda) frequented the Master at Dakshineswar, at Balaram Bose's house, at the Shyampukur house, or at the Cossipore garden house. The story of their early association with the Master, as related by Swami Abhedananda in his autobiography, is moving indeed. An incident may be cited to show how Naren and Kali, along with other devotees, formed an inseparable group and enjoyed the company of Sri Ramakrishna. This was the incident during the Car Festival of Lord Jagannath at Balaram's house on 3 July 1884. Swami Abhedananda wrote: 'That day, on having heard that Paramahamsadeva (Sri Ramakrishna) would come to Balaram Babu's house, devotees came and assembled there from all places to meet him. Having got the information, I went there in the afternoon and found Ramchandra Datta and other lay devotees there. Narendranath and other young devotees were singing *sankirtans* (devotional songs) with the accompaniment of *khol* and *kartal*, and Paramahamsadeva was seated in a state of trance, devoid of physical

consciousness. Gradually, the time for pulling the car came. Paramahamsadeva began to dance in ecstasy in front of the car. He asked Narendranath and others to dance. I too joined that party and danced. The pleasant memory of that delightful festival is still imprinted unforgettably in my heart.'¹

Naren and Kali were kindred souls. During their stay at the Cossipore garden house with Sri Ramakrishna, they followed the teachings of the Master with devotion. Along with other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, they spent their time in meditation, *japa*, discussions on scriptures and other spiritual practices. Narendra would sing too. On a Sivaratri night, specially, Narendra sang many beautiful, soul-stirring songs. Apart from all this, their main purpose was to devote their days attending to the Master. In April 1886, Naren, Kali and Tarak (Swami Shivananda) took great interest in the life and teachings of Lord Buddha and visited Bodhgaya. Naren and Kali and other brother disciples were near Sri Ramakrishna when he entered into *mahasamadhi* in the early hours of 16 August 1886. Naren was the only source of strength and solace to Kali and the other brothers. They were all together when Narendra carried on his head the urn containing the holy ashes (*asthi*) of Sri Ramakrishna to Kankurgachi Yogodyan for preservation.

When the Baranagore monastery was established in 1886, Naren, Kali, and the other brothers used to come and live there. They remained busy discussing the Master, meditating, performing worship, and so on. Kali had a strong desire to accompany on the *pakhwaj* when Naren sang. So he learned *pakhwaj* and played with Naren. Kali was

Naren's constant companion not only as an accompanist but also as a listener in his musical sittings. On a significant day, Kali and other brothers, after performing a formal ritual as instructed by Naren, took monastic vows. Naren gave monastic names to the brothers and himself assumed the name Vividishananda (to change subsequently to Vivekananda). Swami Abhedananda wrote of his new monastic name: 'As I considered the knowledge of the non-dual Absolute the highest and ultimate knowledge, Narendranath gave me the name "Abhedananda".'²

Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda went separately on pilgrimage to different holy places of India. In Kali's wandering life there was always an inner longing to see Naren. Sometimes they met each other unexpectedly and such meetings produced joy. They also longed to see each other. In a letter dated 2 April 1890, Swamiji wrote from Ghazipur to Swami Abhedananda: 'Brother Kali, you long to see me, so do I, deeply.' In another letter dated 19 February 1890, written to Pramadas Mitra from Ghazipur, Swamiji expressed anxiety as Kali was 'having repeated attacks of fever at Hrishikesh.' At the end of the letter, he wrote: 'The sons of my Master are indeed the great objects of my service, and here alone I feel I have some duty left for me. Perhaps I shall send Brother Kali down to Allahabad or somewhere else, as convenient.'³

Once Abhedananda was extremely happy to see Naren in Junagadh. He describes this incident:⁴ 'On arrival at Junagadh, I came to hear from people that a Bengali sannyasin with high English education was staying for some days at the house of Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, a Gujarati brahmin, who was the private secretary of the local nawab. ... Elated with joy, I reached the house of Mansukhram ... by enquiry, and immediately found that my conjecture was true. Narendranath brightened up with joy to see me unexpectedly. I too could not check my tears to meet him [*sic*] after a long time.'

Vivekananda's face glowed with joy while he argued with Tripathi on Advaita. Abhedananda was witness to this. Having heard all about the Baranagore monastery from Abhedananda, Vivekananda told him to return to the monastery: 'After our meal, when I was alone with Narendranath, I informed him of all that had happened at the Baranagore Math. Narendranath heaved a sigh after having heard the full story of Baranagore Math and, staring at me, he said in a spirited voice: "You are a child of Sri Ramakrishna. The Math is for you. If you do not go to the Math then for whom else should the Math exist?" Tears came to my eyes. Narendranath drew me close to him and gave me solace. I shall never be able to forget the affection and solace that I got from him that day.'⁵ The two brothers parted with pain, before Abhedananda started for Dwarka. Abhedananda described the scene of parting: 'At last I bade goodbye to Narendranath. I saw that his eyes were filled with tears. I then remembered those delightful days with Sri Sri Thakur at Cossipore. I too could not check my tears. When I was taking leave from [*sic*] Narendranath, whose heart was inseparable from mine, he told me that he would be going to Bombay in a day or two.'⁶ Later, while in Madras, Abhedananda felt tired and thought of returning to Calcutta. He remembered Naren's words spoken in Mr Tripathi's house.

Returning to Calcutta in 1891, Abhedananda found the monastery shifted to Alambazar from Baranagore. In the monastery the brother disciples were anxious as they had not received any news of Naren. Abhedananda told them how he had met Vivekananda during his wanderings. In October 1893, the inmates of the monastery got the news of Swami Vivekananda's activities in America. Abhedananda and the other brothers rightly guessed that Swami Vivekananda was none other than their Narendranath. Later, from a letter of his they learnt of his famous speech at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. They also came to know of the won-

derful impact his speech had on the audience and of his successful representation of Hinduism.

In his letter Swamiji had expressed anxiety as he was adversely criticized by some Christian missionaries in America. They had said that Swami Vivekananda was not a true representative of Hinduism, and that the religion on which he spoke was not Hinduism. Swamiji wrote to his brother disciples at the monastery: 'Hold a public meeting in Calcutta approving of my activities in America and mentioning that I am accredited to represent Hinduism, and send a letter of thanks to Dr Barrows with a copy to me.'⁷ On receiving this letter, Abhedananda, Saradananda, Ramakrishnananda, Yogananda and others collected money and with sustained efforts arranged a public meeting. The meeting was held at the Town Hall in Calcutta on 6 September 1894. In a letter written to Swami Vivekananda, Raja Peary Mohan Mookerjee, the chairman of the meeting, expressed thanks on behalf of the local Hindu community to Swami Vivekananda for his able representation of their religion at the Parliament of Religions. Copies of the agenda, resolutions and letters of congratulation written to Swamiji were printed and distributed at the meeting, and were sent to Dr Barrows, Snell and Swamiji. In 1894 Swamiji wrote a letter to his dear Abhedananda, expressing his heartfelt thanks to him: 'It is six months since I left Chicago, and I have not yet been free to return. So I could not keep myself well posted. You have taken pains indeed! And for this how can I thank you adequately? You have all evinced wonderful capacity for work. And how can Sri Ramakrishna's words prove false? You have got wonderful spirit in you.'⁸

In 1895 Swamiji wrote to his brother disciples in the monastery: 'To tell you the truth, I do not find among you any distinction of great or small: everyone has the capacity to manifest, in times of need, the highest energy. I see it. Look, for instance, how Shashi will remain always constant to his spot; his steadfastness

is a great foundation rock. How successfully Kali and Jogin brought about the Town Hall meeting; it was indeed a momentous task.'⁹

Abhedananda loved Vivekananda as his elder brother. Vivekananda too loved him as his younger brother. Abhedananda has spoken of his closeness with Vivekananda: 'We two were very intimate with each other and that intimacy remained intact all through.'¹⁰

Swamiji wrote letters to Ramakrishnananda that he wanted Abhedananda for work in England. He advised Ramakrishnananda to make all arrangements. He also gave necessary instructions to Abhedananda. Vivekananda had full confidence in his spiritual brother. So, on 27 October 1896, when Swami Abhedananda delivered his maiden speech on the philosophy of the *Panchadasi* at the Christo-Theosophical Society at Bloomsbury Square, Swami Vivekananda discovered great powers in his speech and expressed in joy: 'Even if I perish out of this plane, my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it.'¹¹ It was this confidence that made Vivekananda leave the entire charge of his work in London to his spiritual brother. In July 1897 Swami Abhedananda sailed for America. In New York he took charge of the Vedanta Society. Swamiji was glad that the Vedanta Society he had founded had made striking progress even in his absence.

Receiving no letter from Abhedananda after his arrival in New York, Swamiji, in a letter dated 30 September 1897, written from Srinagar, expressed his anxiety to Swami Brahmananda. Swamiji wrote to Josephine MacLeod on 3 August 1899 from Wimbledon about his health and his desire to learn French. At the end of that letter he added: 'Kindly give my love to Abhedananda.'¹² In October 1899 the Vedanta Society of New York was relocated. Swamiji wrote to Swami Abhedananda from San Francisco on 19 May 1900 that he was very glad to know about the new home of the Vedanta Society.¹³

In many speeches, Swami Abhedananda

mentioned Swami Vivekananda as his 'illustrious brother' and 'the patron-saint of modern India'. He dedicated his book *The Divine Heritage of Man* to 'the beloved and revered memory of the blessed Swami Vivekananda, my spiritual brother and fellow disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna'.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda showed the world the path of practical Vedanta as reflected in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The spiritual kinship between them had its firm roots in the wonderful teachings of their Master.

To the Master himself, Kali was second to Naren in intelligence. Swami Abhedananda wrote: 'On having heard about my intelligence, Paramahamsadeva one day called me and said: "Among the boys, you too are one of the most intelligent. Your intelligence ranks next to that of Narendranath."',¹⁴

After the death of Swami Vivekananda, a memorial service in his honour was held by the Vedanta Society of New York in October 1902. In his speech, Swami Abhedananda paid respectful homage to his beloved spiritual brother: 'Vivekananda is not dead, he is with

us, now and for ever. He is my comfort and solace.'

*

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God and Devil

The difference between God and the devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and selfishness. The devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God; only he has no holiness—that makes him a devil. Apply the same idea to the modern world: excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes human beings devils.

—Swami Vivekananda (*CW*, I. 425)

Divine Love

When the soul of man is attracted to the highest, divine love begins to manifest itself. Otherwise love is only a reflection or a refraction of true divine love. ... If you put a stick or a pencil into a glass of water the reflection is refracted. It is straight, but it appears crooked on account of the density of the water. Similarly, when the divine love begins to manifest through the human or the sense plane, the imperfection of the sense plane makes it appear crooked, and that is the reason why we get so mixed up.

—Swami Abhedananda

Book Reviews

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA
publishers need to send two copies of their latest publications.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA KATHAMRIT
(Punjabi), vol. 1: Trans. Jasbir Kaur Ahuja;
Pub. Ramakrishna Mission, Ramakrishna
Ashram Marg, New Delhi 110055; 1999; pp.
384; Rs 100.

This neatly produced (and reasonably priced) volume makes *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* available to Punjabi-speaking people worldwide. As Swami Ranganathananda recalls in his Foreword, Sri Ramakrishna's best known disciple Swami Vivekananda had 'tremendous love and respect for Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh—as expressed in his Lahore lecture.' The translation is a free-flowing, chaste and lucid recital of the life and teachings of the great saint of the nineteenth century who became a legend in his relatively short lifespan of fifty years. His mystic love and longing for the eternal Spirit retains an inspiration for thousands of people.

Jasbir Kaur Ahuja's translation of sermons at Dakshineswar brings out the innate beauty and simplicity of Ramakrishna's teachings that come out spontaneously in homespun conversations with disciples and devout people of his time, who came to share his spiritual experiences. These experiences, we are told, consisted of many a vision—of gods and goddesses—but dwelt on the one God common to every religion, like Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. Tradition has it that Sri Ramakrishna was profoundly affected by the ideals preached by Guru Nanak, thanks to his close association with the naga saint, Totapuri. The encounter has been the subject of considerable interest, and we recall an illuminating essay on the theme by Swami Prabhananda in *The Sikh Review* of November 1991.

The ambience of Jasbir Kaur's translation is felicitous, enhanced by evocative *Gurbani* quotations that adorn each chapter—a feature that seems to cast a spell on the reader and lends deeper meaning to the philosophical, though homely and often humorous, conversations through which the catholicity of the Paramahansa comes out vividly. As in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, where a synthesis of bhakti and jnana makes the task of the seeker so much the easier, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna also there is a gentle urge to his disciples to accept God's will and develop *sraddha* while learning about life's mystery on the way to the emancipation of the soul. He says:

'To claim superiority for one's own religion is vanity, for God is one, though His names are many.'

The book is incidentally a veritable who's who of nineteenth century Bengal. Names like Rani Rasmani, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen and, of course, the illustrious Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath Dutta) figure throughout the narrative. While a translation may not lay any claim to originality, in this case the translator succeeds in capturing the spirit and authenticity of Sri Ramakrishna's sermons.

Saran Singh
Editor, The Sikh Review, Kolkata

EXTRACTING THE ESSENCE OF THE ŚRUTI:
THE ŚRUTI - SĀRA - SAMUDDHARAṆAM OF
TŌṬAKĀCĀRYA: Michael Comans; Pub.
Motilal Banarsidass, 41-UA Bungalow Road,
Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110007; 1996; pp.
xxv+121; Rs 195.

The Vedas are called *śrutis*. They are the foundations of Hindu culture, rather of world civilization itself. The truths that the Vedas contain are all eternal and have lasting value. They don't depend on time or place or situation or religious background. The truths, however, are so many and so varied in content and depth that a systematic review is needed to make them easily accessible to the lay reader. One such attempt at harmonizing, systematizing, and bringing out some of the select truths of the Vedas was done by Tōṭakācārya, a disciple of Bhagavān Śaṅkara. His work *Śruti-sāra-samuddharaṇam* is an excellent treatise on the Vedic truths. The title means 'an attempt to save the truths of the eternal *śrutis* from going into oblivion'.

Our thanks to Michael Comans for translating this important work into English. Michael Comans is a great scholar on Advaita, and his *Early Method of Advaita Vedānta* is a highly acclaimed work. Any work done to propagate the eternal message of the Vedas is welcome, and the author should be lauded for his efforts. As it is usual with the publishers, the printing and layout of this book are excellent. *Extracting the Essence of the Śruti* must be owned by everyone interested in Advaita Vedānta.

A Monk

VAISHNAVI—WOMEN AND THE WORSHIP OF KRISHNA: Ed. Steven J Rosen; Pub. Motilal Banarsidass; 1996; pp. 301; Rs 195.

'Saints,' wrote A.K. Ramanujan, the celebrated poet and critic, 'are both representatives of and alternatives to the culture. They express society's ideals and defy society's norms. Thus the saint is the Other for ordinary men and women. He or she is in a dialectical relationship to the rest of society.' And when one comes to women, he adds: 'Woman fights not with temptation but with family, husband, molesters, and, like the untouchable saints, with brahmins, social restrictions, and for entry into the congregation (*gosti*) of saints. Not conversion, but the freedom to pursue her god, looking not for a husband who is a god but a god who will be a lover and husband, is her quest.'

Perhaps *Vaishnavi* examines the implications of the above remarks and takes gender studies vis-a-vis religions to a level of sophistication generally not evident in this area. With the focus on women and the worship of Krishna (or simply Vaishnava women saints), we have in this book quite a few articles which are refreshing. The remarkable thing is the way in which implicit devotion is not allowed to compromise rigorous scholarship. The overall assumption behind the essays is articulated clearly by Steven J Rosen, the editor: 'Contemporary feminists are primarily concerned with secular reality, with achieving social and political equality through education and culture, while Vaishnava women are more concerned with spiritual development.' And since Vaishnavism is a basically a bhakti religion, and thinking 'women have it quite good.'

The nine essays in the volume, more or less, adhere to this overall perspective and show considerable variety. There are two studies each of Mirabai and Andal, and one on Bahinabai. The rest are general studies on 'Women saints in Gaudiya Vaishnavism', 'The debate about women in the Hare Krishna movement', 'Raganuga bhakti: bringing out the inner woman in Gaudiya Vaishnava sadhana' and 'Theology does help women's liberation: Sri Vaishnavism, a Hindu case study'.

Obviously this is a substantial fare and the longest essay is also the most interesting. Katherine K Young's essay on Vaisnava theology is a case study of women's liberation. Giving a brief historical resume, she examines in detail Sri Vaishnava views on women. The interesting point is made that 'unlike many women who have not had access to Vedic experience and so cannot fulfil the prerequisites for moksha (in those circles that deem it essential), Sri Vaishnava women have had access to *sruti* because of the claim that the hymns of the Alvars

are the Tamil Veda.' She sees this as 'liberation orientation of Sri Vaishnava texts in contrast to the rebirth orientation prescribed for women in many dharmasastric passages.' In fact, despite sectarian differences, the Vaishnava doctrine holds that any woman can surrender to God and thereby achieve freedom which is linked to *prapatti*, the crucial element of surrender (of course, Vedanta Desika holds an antithetical view in this regard). Moreover, the perspective of identifying with woman—the attitude of the Alvars—in sadhana since her relationship with God is paradigmatic for male devotees' is also a crucial facet. Hence arises bridal mysticism. Indeed this aspect needs further exploration, for postmodernist feminists like Luce Irigaray are intrigued by the fact that, as Toril Moi observes: 'Though not all mystics were women, mysticism nevertheless seems to have formed one area of high spiritual endeavour under patriarchy where women could and did excel more frequently than men.' But then, as Young argues, patriarchy has its own manoeuvres to contain women. Andal, for instance, is declared as 'unique' but her rejection of marriage is never allowed to achieve its inherent potential as a 'subversive' act—though a deeply religious one. In short, *stridharma* in consonance with patriarchy triumphs—as analysed by Nancy Ann Nayar in 'The other Andal'. Perhaps Andal as one who (by marriage to Kuresa) reflects a life of devotion to God within the context of *stridharma* is an archetype that feminist scholarship needs to assess (and appropriate?) as possibly a counterpoint to radical postures. In this context, the analysis made by Dennis Hudson of the fact that Andal 'addressed her own erotic desire (*kama*) directly through liturgical action', is an important facet which needs careful consideration. (With the proliferation of tantra of all variety in the West, it is necessary to be very guarded about body vis-a-vis spirituality. The implicit shifting perspectives are very crucial.)

Jan Brzezinski provides an interesting overview which emphasizes the fact that 'quite frequently the very aspect of women glorified in a religious system are used as justification for the social and political degradation of women.' He sees that the Chaitanya movement in spite of obvious perception of women as desire that is detrimental to spiritual practice does not enjoin hatred or denigration of women. Thus a comprehensive study should be rewarding as evidenced in Brzezinski's study of, for instance, Vishnupriya, Chaitanya's second wife, and the second generation women such as Jashnava Iswari and Ganga Devi. An interesting section is on modern women saints of this tradition and one is grateful for his—alas, all too short—note on Yasoda Ma, guru of Sri Krishna Prem. Moreover, what is of great interest to

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda admirers is the fact that 'as a girl of twelve or thirteen, she was chosen as a representative of the goddess at a Kumari Puja in which Swami Vivekananda himself offered flowers at her feet.'

Of the two essays on Mira, Andrew Shelling's is intensely experiential (understandable in terms of his nature as a poet and translator of Mirabai's songs). He speaks of 'a particularly explosive dream in which Mira appeared, her figure luminously merged with the women I'd fallen in love with'. And the dream resulting in a poem gives perhaps the clue to his own stance. 'What survives,' he prophesies, 'what will carry into the next millennium is Mirabai's passion—and her art. The poetry. Five hundred years after her birth, on a continent half a world away, the notion of pursuing a raven-skinned god through the forests (now mostly deserts) of north India could only appeal to a few. The poetry remains. The intelligence that animates her song and non-Hindu responses is something I can't give any other term than *poetry*.' This is perfectly valid but then valid as an imaginative truth. As for few following 'the raven-skinned God,' I am not sure Shelling means what he writes—in view of the diffusion of the Hare Krishna movement among many others.

Nancy Martin sees Mira as 'the perfect example of absolute devotion in the face of seemingly insurmountable opposition' and getting 'attached with the greatest specificity and tenacity to women who refuse to accept an identity based on being a wife and mother and, instead, embrace lives of devotion to Krishna.' The images she finds is a reality in the case of Mother Krishna of Mathura, Miraji of Mewar, Mirabai of Salagram temple and Mira Mataji—most of them living in Vrindaban. Some of them compose songs and replicate the archetypal Mira's life. These saints raise an important issue: they are not 'fully integrated into *sampradayas*.' Perhaps these latter-day Miras are, as the original Mira was, subversive to, for instance, the Vallabha *sampradaya*. But they, as Nancy Martin rightly says,

'attest to the significance of ... the ongoing and lively presence of Mirabai in the imagination and lives of twentieth century devotees.'

Bahinabai, however, is an exception to 'the female bhakti paradigm,' and represents an average Indian woman 'shaped,' says Mary McGee in her illuminating analysis 'both socially and psychologically by the brahminical and patriarchal ideal of the obedient wife (*pativrata*). But the autobiographical *abhangas* reveal a woman who went through great ordeals which clearly show 'gender bias of the brahminical culture which has' ironically 'influenced Bahinabai's own thinking'. Thus Bahinabai reflects the ordeal, the conflict between domestic norms and spirituality: 'her self-doubt, her contemplation of suicide, her initial contempt for her female body which denied her access to union with God'.

Finally, the editor's study of *raganuga* bhakti and the 'Inner woman in Gaudiya Vaishnavism' is a model of painstaking research and clarity. His analysis of *raganuga* bhakti, which is modelled on *ragatmika*, he says, is divided into two categories consisting of followers of those 'with transcendental lust (*kamanuga*), who are solely in *madhurya rasa*, and followers of those who relish relational bhakti or *sambandhanuga*, who may be engaged in any of the five *rasas* but who are not given to the special "lustful" brand of *madhurya*'. Rosen discusses the implications in depth and illumines such concepts as *vaidhi* bhakti and finds in Chaitanya a refreshing contrast to the Nietzschean concept of God. He finds in *raganuga* bhakti the eternal dance, the highest aspect of divine love.

A review can hardly do justice to the wealth of information and insights evident in the book. It is a very significant contribution in the areas of Vaishnavism and women.

Dr M Sivaramkrishna
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Osmania University, Hyderabad

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool ...
leave him alone.

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is simple ...
teach him.

He who knows and knows not that he knows, is asleep ...
awaken him.

He who knows and knows that he knows, is wise ...
follow him!

News and Reports

Started. A new branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math, named *Ramakrishna Math, Baranagore*, at the site of the old Baranagore Math of sacred memories, the first monastery of the Ramakrishna Order. The centre's address: Ramakrishna Math, 125/1 Pramanick Ghat Road, Kolkata 700036; Phone: 33-557-0827. Swami Sanatanananda has been appointed head of the centre.

Started. A new branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, named *Persatuan Sri Ramakrishna Sarada, Petaling Jaya*. Its address: Persatuan Sri Ramakrishna Sarada, Lot 36, Jalan 10/7, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: <swami@time.net.my>. Phone: 60-3-79600385. Swami Tanmayananda has been appointed head of the centre.

Laid. Foundation stone for the office block and bookshop of Ramakrishna Mission, Jammu, by Swami Smarananandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 22 August 2001. He also addressed a public meeting on the occasion.

Launched. Website of Ramakrishna Mission, Jammu, by Dr Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, on 23 August 2001.

Honoured. A teacher of a higher secondary school run by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chennai, by the Vice-President of India with the National Award for Best Teacher.

Honoured. A teacher of our Narottam Nagar school by the Vice-President of India with the National Award for Teachers.

Celebrated. By Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow, its 75th anniversary on 22 October 2001 by organizing a public meeting presided over by Sri Atal Behari

Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India. Sri Vishnukant Shastri, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Sri Raj Nath Singh, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and Swami Smarananandaji addressed the meeting. The Prime Minister also released the Platinum Jubilee Commemoration Volume.

Released. A postage stamp and first-day cover to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home,



Batticaloa (a sub-centre of Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo), by the Minister of Posts & Telecommunications, Government of Sri

Lanka, on 19 October 2001.

Relief and Rehabilitation

Distributed. 2000 saris, 2000 dhotis, 2000 blankets and 13,300 assorted clothes to the worst-affected flood victims of Siddharthnagar and Gorakhpur districts by Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow, in October 2001. Earlier, in September 2001, the Sevashrama distributed food, and provided medical relief to thousands of flood-affected people from several villages in those districts.

Inaugurated. A school building at Pipalia village of Ranvav taluk (Porbandar district), built by Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Smriti Mandir, Porbandar, by Sri Dhirubhai Shah, Speaker of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, on 2 October 2001. The Gujarat earthquake rehabilitation work is going on at a brisk pace.